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THE LETTERS OF
LADY LOUISA STUART

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

THE LETTERS OF
MARY RUSSELL MITFORD
THE LETTERS OF HANNAH MORE
THE LETTERS OF JANE AUSTEN
BLUESTOCKING LETTERS

Each volume edited, with an Introduction, by
R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

THE BODLEY HEAD

THE LETTERS OF LADY LOUISA STUART

SELECTED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

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PREFACE

THE *Letters* of Lady Louisa Stuart were first printed in :

(i) *Gleanings from an Old Portfolio*, edited by Mrs. Godfrey Clark [great-granddaughter of Lady Portarlington]. 3 vols. 1895. Privately printed. Covering 1778-1813.

(ii) *Letters of Lady Louisa Stuart to Miss Louisa Clinton*, edited by Hon. James Home [grandson of Lady Montagu and great-grandson of the Duke of Buccleuch]. First series, 1901. Covering 1817-1825. Second series, 1903. Covering 1826-1834.

(iii) A few in *Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, edited by David Douglas. 2 vols. 1894. And in

(iv) *Lady Louisa Stuart*. Selections from her Manuscripts. Edited by Hon. James Home, 1899.

This selection has been permitted by the generous courtesy of the Marquis of Bute, on behalf of the family ; of the Earl of Home, representing his uncle, the Hon. James Home ; and of Mr. Wyndham Clark, Mrs. Clark's son.

Mr. Clark has also been kind enough to look over, and approve, the selection from *Gleanings from an Old Portfolio*. The notes and information in the Introduction are also from these volumes, which are indeed the only authorities for Lady Louisa's Life.

Although Lady Louisa Stuart had grave objections to any kind of publicity, she allowed Lockhart to print many of Scott's intimate letters to her in the *Life*; and out of kindness to her nephews, Dr. Corbet and Lord Wharnccliffe, she wrote the well-known and delightful *Introductory Anecdotes* to the latter's *Life* of her grandmother, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

Mrs. Clark's "Gleanings," written for her children "to remind them of the link between themselves and these ladies of a past generation," contain a goodly number of slight, gay, and serious poems by Lady Louisa.

Partly, no doubt, because it appeared to her "one of the chief defects of the present age (though I am not apt to carp at it), that in most families the juniors know no more about their immediate ancestry than about yours or mine, and indeed very little about their near (let alone their distant) relations. Poor Lord Haddington used to say this sort of ignorance and *insouciance* in people of family had been cleverly fostered by the Demo-

she wrote the interesting and intimate *Memoir of John Duke Argyll*, which is in fact a story of the generations, for his great-granddaughter Caroline Lucy Scott. This was twice privately printed, and can now be read in the "Selections" from her manuscripts edited by the Hon. James Home. It includes the amusing and outspoken account of *Lady Mary Coke*—"one of the most brilliant and convincing studies in eccentricity ever written."

Her *Fairies Frolic* and *The Diamond Robe* are printed in the same volume, with prose *Notes* which, as the editor suggests, are more important than the poems themselves.

Scott used to say that "half his fame as a minstrel-reciter depended on a very clever ballad of Lady Louisa Stuart's called *Ugly Meg*"—who may still be seen eagerly gazing upon the "comely batch'lor" as he hesitates between her and "the noose," in a quaint illustration to the *Gleanings from an Old Portfolio*.

R. B. J.

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THE LETTERS OF
LADY LOUISA STUART

INTRODUCTION

LADY LOUISA STUART

12 AUGUST 1757—4 AUGUST 1851

I

“THE Sins of Society” were as favourite a topic among friends in the eighteenth century as they have since become in all sections of the press. Reckless gaming, extravagance in dress, drunken riots, and irregular “establishments” were continually deplored; not only by professional moralists like Hannah More.

And among those more personally intimate with the “family party” of George III, the Great Ladies of a somewhat severe integrity were also distinguished by culture, intellectual taste, and enthusiasm for the arts. They mingled freely with the new middle-class, earnest or brilliant, professional writers, painters, and musicians: also exemplars of sober virtue. Where Mrs. Delany, by her personal distinction, and the Duchess of Portland, by birth, led the way, a considerable number of less famous, but remarkable, well-born women deserve—and have, in some

cases, secured—a place in literature by their shrewd and attractive comments on men and books. Some were themselves authors or artists, but strictly “among friends” and declining publication, subordinating their work to all social or family responsibilities. Their great interest for us is the first-hand, intimate and discerning, comments of their letters or journals upon every phase of life: the Court, Society, Politics, the County, Club-land, Grub-Street, and the Diversions.

They were, moreover, personalities; if not prominently in the public eye, yet wielding great influence by strength of character. Their names recur in Boswell, Fanny Burney, Horace Walpole, and every memoir or journal of the period; always mentioned with respect.

Lady Louisa Stuart was an important member of the group and, as she retained her keen interest in humanity for ninety-four years, always moving among the best people, her field of observation was extraordinarily varied and attractive.

It was inevitable, perhaps, that the granddaughter of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu should shrink from literary fame; yet a critic of our own day has boldly declared that, but for the overshadowing of one so well known in the art, Lady Louisa's *Letters* would have been generally recognized as some of the best in the language.

The association, moreover, was no unmixed blessing to Lady Louisa herself. She says frankly of certain intimate relations : “ Whatever evil influence Lady Mary Wortley cast over the family is quite dispelled in that branch of it and some others. Their blood has recovered the taint of hers, and runs as pure from it as any alderman’s in the land.”

Fanny Burney, again, adopts the same point of view in her graphic characterization :

“ One morning at this time Mrs. Delany had a long visit from Lady Bute and Lady Louisa Stuart, and I went to her house to meet them. I had frequently been of the same party with them in town, and I was glad to see them again. Lady Bute, with an exterior the most forbidding to strangers, has powers of conversation the most entertaining and lively where she is intimate. She is full of anecdote, delights in strokes of general satire, yet with mere love of comic, not insidious ridicule. She spares not for giving her opinions, and laughs at fools as well as follies with the shrewdest derision. Lady Louisa Stuart, her youngest daughter, has parts equal to those of her mother, with a deportment and appearance infinitely more pleasing ; yet she is far from handsome, but proves how well beauty may be occasionally missed when understanding and vivacity unite to fill up her place. I had conceived much liking to her formerly in town, and had been much flattered by marks of kindness received from her. She and her mother both sent to me now, and I spent an hour—all I had to command—very pleasantly with them. They told a

thousand anecdotes of Mrs. North, whom they had just parted from at Bath. They seem both to inherit an ample portion of the wit of their mother and grandmother, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, though I believe them both to have escaped all inheritance of her faults. I wish I had it in my power to meet with them more frequently—spirited conversation with agreeable people falls now so rarely to my lot.”

December 1, 1787.

“ I had received an invitation for to-day to meet Lady Bute and Lady Louisa Stuart at my dearest Mrs. Delany’s, and I should have wished it at all times, so much I like them both. . . . Lady B. and Lady Louisa were both in such high spirits themselves that they kept up all the conversation between them with such a vivacity, an acuteness, an archness, and an observation on men and manners so clear and sagacious, that it would be difficult to pass an evening of greater entertainment. They were just returning from Bath, and full fraught with anecdote and character, which they dealt out to their hearers with so much point and humour that we attended to them like a gratified audience of a public place.”

2

This picture of Lady Louisa Stuart as a drawing-room “ entertainer ” is, at first sight, rather hard to reconcile with the marked antipathy to “ showing off ” and almost severe feminine propriety which is manifest in her correspondence. Here, to some extent no doubt, she was playing up to Lady Bute,

the only woman with whom Lady Mary Wortley Montagu never quarrelled, and the deep sympathy between mother and daughter is more than once expressed in the strongest terms. Again, though her letters are not so brilliant as Mrs. Thrale's, Mrs. Montagu's, or Fanny's own, they yet frequently startle and grip the imagination by a strangely calm daring of humorous and pithy phrase that may fairly be called drastic. She only escapes bitterness by a hair's breadth ; and her confessions of a fiery temper, subdued by a strong will, were perhaps not only sincere but true : " Often I am much too violent upon paper," she says. It is self-control, ruling keen insight, clear judgment, and the courage of her own convictions that give point and power to her thoughts and style.

As the youngest of a large family, she was only a girl when Lord Bute permanently retired, a somewhat disappointed man, from a distinguished public life ; and the discipline of those early years was often recalled as at once a blessing and a curse.

" I knew the evil of being the *youngest* among brothers and sisters, of being daily snubbed and checked '*for all my nonsense*,' and told by elders, of whom I stood in awe, of my self-conceit and affectation of wisdom, in reading books I had no sort of business with instead of minding my work as I should. . . . Whatever I wanted to learn, everybody was up in arms to oppose it, and represent

that if I indulged in it I should become such a pedant that nobody would be able to bear me. My temper, alas ! was not improved by this discipline, nor yet my humility increased. . . . But some of its effects have stuck faithfully by me—the want of power to bear any part in general conversation, arising from the habit of dreading the ridicule which usually followed whenever I opened my lips ; and a constant apprehension of being despised by *men* (which is just the way to make one so) from having had it dinned into my ears that if they suspected my pursuits and inclinations they would spit in my face.”

But “some of those I have loved best . . . let me go my own way as they went theirs. . . . This saved me from being a coxcomb. I learned perforce not to over-estimate goods that I often found unsaleable.”

She was, moreover, forbidden to marry her second cousin, Colonel William Medows, for whom her “affection” is described as “romantic.” His death in India, more than thirty years later, was deeply felt, and is said to “explain many allusions to an unhappy attachment which are scattered” through the letters.

Clearly she loved her family, but hated her home. The father must be obeyed—and never worried. He would often insist upon their staying in the country, when Lady Bute and Louisa longed for “town,” or perversely chose to “come up” again out of the season.

She continually bewails (to her favourite sister, Lady Portarlington) the intolerable boredom of life in the "magnificent barns" of Luton—which Mrs. Delany found so "capacious and delightful, all elegantly furnished without ostentation"; and when doomed "to remain in town for ever and ever Amen," records a hope that "no disagreeable man who has a pleasant country house will come and tempt me to do a foolish thing."

The experience inspired a philosophy that would certainly appeal to the present generation. She is continually advising her young friend, Miss Clinton, to avoid "quiet," family "conversing," and go out into "company—that being a positive cordial, a dram, what whisky is to an Irishman or a highlander. . . . *It must be owned that for young people home is a very dull place.*"

She describes her father's as

"a really noble mind, one of perfect integrity and honour, soured, irritated, preying on itself, etc. etc. etc. etc."; despite "a thousand resources of literature, of science, of taste, *virtu*, natural history, gardening, pictures, buildings, collections, that mended the matter so little in point of producing contentment."

And of men in general she declares, "I never yet knew a very remarkable, a super, and extra female fool, who was not popular among them."

3

It was her strong conviction that a "female" should never be a "politician" because her judgments would always be influenced by her emotions. But her father's experience of public life had been too prominent, his disappointment too keen, his sons and sons-in-law too officially diplomatic, for her to refrain from watching "affairs" with eager attention and vigorously canvassing them with her friends. In actual fact, she reveals every prejudice and conviction of the highest of high Tories, assuming, with an intolerance she would never have shown towards any personal or private difference of opinion, that all opponents were dishonest, insincere and immoral—"those people appear to me agents of the very Devil himself." There is "a general push against the old interests everywhere. . . . What shall we try next? . . . The moment any *reform* is carried, by a sort of popular clamour, . . . it has spirited up popular cries for others which would utterly change our constitution . . . *the abolition of slavery* . . . the overthrow of a National Church."

She quotes "against the education mania . . . with regard to the lower orders," certain "staring facts" from a report upon "every place of refuge or punishment": that the majority of young

prisoners of both sexes come from national or charity schools where they have been taught "reading and writing without industry"!— "*Arithmetical questions for poor boys and girls—oh-h-h-h!*" Their time should be given to "hedging, ditching, gardening, tailoring, and cobbling; household work, washing, and cooking."

Yet "pride of birth makes dull people duller"; and she was essentially liberal-minded on every question that had not acquired a "party" colour. The conventional phrasing of eighteenth-century writers, and their acceptance of formal codes, often blinds us to the vigorous mental independence with which clever women then chose their intimates and judged private morality. Orthodoxy permits greater freedom of mind than any, the most advanced, theoretical ideal of progressive reform.

She had, moreover, a genius for friendship; and was continuously exploring new ideas, because she loved young people, and delighted to see one generation after another entering the world with a fresh outlook and wider opportunities for happiness and knowledge.

Towards culture and intellect she reveals a similar combination of the conventional, sound background with alert independence of critical judgment that easily moved forward from Richardson to Thackeray, to Tennyson from Pope.

She was "firmly persuaded the Classics are the foundation of all good sense and good taste": advising even a lady to "cultivate her Latin studies, persevere and learn it thoroughly. Aye, and Greek too. Why not? *Nobody need know* anything of the matter. Besides, it is not run down now as it was in my time. Women are now permitted, if not encouraged to know something. Solid and difficult studies never make coxcombs of either sex."

On the other hand—

"The true use of a public school is that free intercourse between a boy and his school-fellows which equalizes all ranks and fortunes, and teaches him, if one may say so, the charities of life, by making him feel that *what he is* signifies more than *who he is*—a sort of republican discipline, rough, but most wholesome and useful to the mind."

She would not meet anyone who "desired her acquaintance as a *bel esprit*, a *blue-stocking*, the thing in the world I dislike most to be *affiché*": holding "an ounce of wit worth a pound of clergy," as the "good old proverb" declares.

"For tho' nobody respects solid learning more," she continues, "I fear I am rather heretical with regard to my reverence for *liter-a-pudding*. To taste that happy expression you should have known its coiner, the late Lady Cecilia Johnstone, who had several pounds of mother-wit, without half an

ounce of clergy, and was ready to disclaim the half-ounce when in company of pretenders to a greater quantity. . . . 'When I live with people of the world,' complained her more ambitious daughter, 'you are sure to find fault ; and when I live with people of literature——' 'Liter-a-pudding,' quoth Lady Cecilia, and not a word more."

Lady Louisa, too, pitied a friend who had always "associated with affected people, exclusives and exquisites." Yet Scott declared her to be the best critic of *belles-lettres* he knew,—“Indeed, I do not know a person who has the half of her taste and talents, or could do a young author half so much good. Lady Louisa unites what are rarely found together—a perfect tact, such as few even in the higher classes attain, with an uncommon portion of that rare quality called genius. As a Lady she has the art of communicating criticism without giving pain, and never having been a hackneyed author like some folks you know of.”

This was praise given from inside knowledge ; for she was one of the first to be entrusted with the secret of the authorship of the *Waverley* novels. She wrote freely and frankly to him about his work ; never hesitating to criticize the genius she so sincerely and enthusiastically admired as an intimate, older, friend : more than once putting him right on details of personal history.

Of his poem on Waterloo she writes :

“ These are my honest opinions, just as I should give them to any third person : and let me fairly add that I by no means expected to be so much pleased. Whatever subject draws universal attention, sets ‘ every goose cackling,’ every newspaper declaiming, descanting, admiring, lamenting, exaggerating, is harder for a poet to handle than Swift’s broomstick itself, and I protest, I thought Waterloo such a hopeless one, that I was almost vexed at your undertaking it. But you have wonderfully avoided the commonplace.”

Scott, in return, was allowed to know more, than even her own brothers and sisters, of the poems and tales that she was continually writing for her own private amusement. At ten years old she had started a French novel, and drawn up plans for a play on a Roman story. But the determination against exhibiting her talent to excite praise, was already firm and unflinching—

If e’er a couplet is displayed
 (Tho’ by the Rule of Crambo made),
 If ever Epigram or Ode
 Or Song or Tale by me is showed,
 May I, ye Gods of Parnass hear,
 Ye sacred maids residing there !
 Oh, may I be forsook of all
 Your sisters for whose aid I call—
 May I be more for Dulness famed
 Than any in the *Dunciad* named !

And in later years she plainly warned an aristocratic acquaintance, who had been pressed to pub-

lish an "entertaining journal" of her experiences in India, that "turning authoress meant losing caste, putting yourself on a level with the plebeians." The lady afterwards told her husband how she had been "on the point of publishing a book."—"I am sure," answered he, "I would never have married you if you had."

To Lady Louisa, the modern "frequency of the thing increases the objection instead of removing it. . . . I think the lords and ladies contrive to be just as vulgar and flippant as the Greeks whose province they invade . . . and we shall shortly see 'Buy Bentley's novels' upon the walls along with 'Buy Warren's blacking.'"

While Johnson was raising literature from patronage to a profession, these great ladies, really cultured and respecting culture, remained determined amateurs; despising an empty mind, but faithful to "good form."

Like most of those capable of appreciating real literature, Lady Louisa enjoyed novels of almost any description; admitting her taste with unusual frankness:

"I did not read novels when very young, and possibly I like them all the better afterwards; they are like wine to a person not used to them, but I fear I have now been a downright dram-drinker, so long have they lost their effect."

The question she once put to Scott reveals a keen interest and observation of the world and books :

“ Why *very* young people, who do not yet know the existing world, should so far partake of the spirit of their age as to judge according to it of books that are as new to them as they were to their parents or forefathers when they first came out ? What suggested it to me was this : In my own day all mothers strictly forbade their daughters to read Rousseau’s *Nouvelle Héloïse*, and all daughters, of course, longed to read nothing so much. I knew one young lady who owned to me that she stole a reading of it standing on the top steps of her father’s library-ladder ; and another, who procured it and carried it into the country with her on her wedding-day, as the first fruits of being her own mistress. To say the truth, I believe no book ever did so much mischief. Yet within these few years I happened to hear a girl of very warm feeling, enthusiastic, romantic, just the person whose head it would have turned of old, declare she had tried to read it, but been so disgusted that she threw it away before she got through half the first volume.”

This again forestalls our present-day impatience of romance, and hints that to forbid is to encourage.

Yet she read aloud, from a favourite author, “ as if she had written it herself.” She comments, with discrimination, on Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, Rousseau and Cervantes, *Tom Jones*, *Emma*, *A Man of Feeling* Coleridge. Mrs. Shelley, and Crabbe.

“Flimsy novel language disgusts” her ; and she “perceives a difference between *Sir Charles Grandison* and the common novels one now meets with, like that between roast beef and whipt syllabub” ; even while going “into fits of laughter, with the young people, at the coaches and six, and low bows, and handing ladies about the room.” Again, “no modern *stuff* can possibly do after *Tom Jones*,” though it taught her to swear.

4

One could not call Lady Louisa’s an empty life ; though her ninety-four years passed almost without an event. As the only unmarried daughter she was practically in attendance upon her parents till she was thirty-seven, when Lady Bute died, and she took No. 108 Gloucester Place, where she spent the rest of her life.

There were, indeed, variations of the “daily round,” in fairly frequent moving from one family “place” to another—in town or country, and during visits to relations or friends. Independence, in her own home, extended the circle, enabled her to choose her own time for visits and travel, to receive and entertain her own friends.

But always the passing of years was chiefly marked by the death of some intimate or relation,

“ inroads on her happiness,” as Walter Scott said, to which perhaps celibacy had rendered her more liable, by extending the affections of so kind a heart through the remoter range of relationship ” ; by meeting new friends ; and by the “ growing up ” of favourite nephews and nieces.

Her happiest early years were spent at Wharnccliffe, the Yorkshire home inherited by Lady Bute ; though the family were all attached to Highcliffe, near Christchurch, where Lord Bute had moved and perfected his once famous Botanic Garden ; and she herself always delighted in visiting their numerous Scotch family connections at Bothwell or Douglas Castle.

Though keenly observant and interested in almost every specimen of mankind, somewhat impulsive and warm-hearted both in her likes and dislikes, secretly fond of fun and, for example, always eager about “ a race,” early discipline had given her a form of shyness that was sometimes described as haughty ; she expressed herself more fully and forcibly in writing than in conversation, and once declared that in the houses she was wont to frequent “ they would all allow I was an inoffensive piece of furniture, and otherwise think as little of me as I am apt to do of them.”

There is, however, no occasion for us to picture her as a forlorn and romantic spinster, crushed by

the parental slaughter of her first romance. Though she clearly long remembered her cousin-lover and is said to have worn widow's weeds after his death, she was not embittered by his finding consolation elsewhere, and made no vow against marriage—for herself or others.

Her reasons for the rejection of other suitors more acceptable to the family prestige were, indeed, scarcely romantic. In one case she was apparently deterred by doubts of getting on with a widower's children; and, in another, she plainly declared that £1500 a year was "not enough" for people with a position to keep up. I imagine that, without any very deliberate intention, she had become somewhat fastidious, and may very well have demanded a high standard from men; just because, in her view—

"The truth is, woman has a natural dependence on man, which, do what she will, she can never shake off. I believe (in earnest believe) it part of the curse originally laid on Eve, 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee,' which she can by no means elude by taking no husband, or surviving one, or keeping her heart free from a tyrannical passion. A son or a brother takes the reins, or a clergyman, a lawyer, a physician, becomes her governor. If she can escape all and stand quite alone, quite independent of man, *tant pis pour elle*, it only renders her existence uncommonly forlorn and desolate. I have seen a woman

forced to endure treatment from her butler that would have been held just cause of complaint against a husband. . . . It seems a very fine thing to be utterly independent, but God almighty made no woman to be so."

Whatever the explanation, she had declared, at twenty, that she had "nothing to do with love"; and when receiving a legacy, twenty-two years later, immediately handed over £5000 of it to her sister's "four younger children": insisting that her generosity was no sacrifice because "one need not consider one's progeny at past two-and-forty, especially when one has not yet seen *Monsieur leur Père*."

For more than half a century 108 Gloucester Place was the centre of a circle of devoted friends and relations, to whom "the charm of her conversation proved ever a great attraction."

The earlier family letters reveal her largely absorbed in her sister, Lady Portarlington, and her children; while the later series, to Louisa Clinton, are as sisterly in their intimate affection, though less domestic; naturally covering a wider field of subjects and throwing more light on her character and tastes, her opinions of men and things.

By her own account she had several "former temporary favourites; I like very few people, and when I do like anybody, it is not for any merit of

theirs, but because it is my humour at the present moment."

"Did you ever read *Emma*, a novel of Miss Austen's? I have seen three or four *Harriet Smiths* taken up and let down again, and you not being quite a *Harriet Smith*, your *good genius* would rather you were not of the number. The present inmate is, I acknowledge, rather of the *Miss Jane Fairfax* class, and the first I have known so favoured. . . . Oh! how I wish (and have long wished) for the *Mr. Knightly* to come and take the government on his own shoulders, then everything would go on as it ought . . . which proves me to be something like a romantic old fool."

The passage tempts us to reconstruct the younger Louisa from the half-humorous hint of a Harriet Smith with the brain of Jane Fairfax: to wonder if the writer regarded herself as a second Emma!

There were forty years between the ages of the two friends, and every page of their correspondence proves that, if Lady Louisa was always content to look on at life, she did not miss happiness for herself; that she kept her heart always young, and could be very tender of the "old ways," while welcoming and entering into new ideas, new standards, and new tastes.

From the circumstances of the family she had always had, at least when in London, her share of the usual society amusements among an "elegant"

and stimulating circle of friends. Lord Bute was not only a statesman, but intelligently interested in the arts, with literary tastes ; universally respected, and a judge of men. He obtained, for example, a pension of £300 for Dr. Johnson, and printed twelve copies of *Botanical Tables, containing the different families of British Plants*, 9 vols. 4to, at a cost of over £1000. He had " partly built " Luton Hoo, after designs from Adams, and employed " Capability Brown " to lay out the grounds. The library was a noble apartment, stocked with well-chosen books.

The critical Mrs. Delany speaks of Lady Bute's " natural and improved good sense and knowledge of the world as a never-failing fund of agreeable conversation," and describes Lady Caroline as " a genius in painting, with a clear sweet voice, under good management, and less of the fashionable yell than most of her contemporaries, extremely good-humoured and sensible."

The brothers were all out in life before Lady Louisa was old enough to value their companionship, and her sisters all married ; William, the Archbishop, was a distinguished and liberal-minded Churchman, devoted to public service ; while Jane's husband, Earl Macartney, held high diplomatic positions all over the world, and Lord Portarlington was an influential Irish patriot. The tradi-

tion of public life was honourably maintained, carrying her into an atmosphere of wide interests and distinguished company, always active and alive.

She had many friends, an exceptionally active and well-informed mind, with the habit of thinking for herself. She knew very well how to enjoy life and give pleasure to others.

R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON.

CHIEF PERSONS IN THE LETTERS

JOHN, THIRD EARL OF BUTE, the grandson of Archibald, first Duke of Argyll, was born in 1713, and married in 1736, Mary, Baroness Mount Stuart of Wortley, born at Constantinople in 1717, daughter of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu ; with a fortune of £20,000 a year. Lord Bute died in 1792, and his widow survived him two years. He was Prime Minister in 1763.

They had five sons, followed by six daughters, Lady Louisa being the youngest.

The eldest son, JOHN, succeeded to the title.

The second son, JAMES, had two sons, of whom the eldest became Lord Wharncliffe.

The fifth son, WILLIAM, became Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of Ireland, and married the daughter of T. Penn of Stoke Pogis.

The eldest daughter, MARY, married in 1761, Sir James Lowther, created EARL OF LONSDALE in 1784. He died in 1802, and she survived him for many years. It was not a happy marriage, and Lord Lonsdale was best remembered by a famous

case, which he lost, against the Duke of Portland, over a grant of land.

Lady Louisa calls him "cold-hearted and political." Lady Bute, after a visit from Lady Mary, once wrote : " You can't imagine how sorry we were to part with her, and how much I lament her unlucky fate in not having been matched to a tolerable creature. . . . She is good-humoured and agreeable."

The second daughter, JANE, married in 1768, Sir George Macartney, created EARL MACARTNEY in 1792, who was Envoy extraordinary at St. Petersburg, Secretary for Ireland under Lord Townshend, Governor of Grenada and of Madras ; refused the Governor-Generalship of India (but received a pension of £1500 a year from the Company) ; became Ambassador extraordinary to China and Governor of the Cape. His *Life and Memoirs* were written by his secretary, John Barrow. He died in 1806, many years before his wife.

The third daughter, ANNE, married EARL PERCY.

The fourth daughter, AUGUSTA, married ANDREW CORBET, father of the Archdeacon.

The fifth daughter, CAROLINE, married, in 1778, John, eldest son of William Henry Dawson, created Viscount Carlow in 1776, three years before his death. Her husband, therefore, became Viscount Carlow in 1779, and was created EARL OF

PORTARLINGTON in 1785. They had nine children. He died in 1798 ; Lady Caroline in 1813.

LORD BUTE's only brother JOHN, who assumed the surname of Mackenzie, married his cousin Elizabeth (Lady Betty), fourth daughter of the DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH, and, till his death at the age of eighty-one, was a great favourite with his nephews and nieces, though always regarding them as little children : " At 18 you were 5 years old, at 30, nay 40, not above 12 ; assailed with little jokes and nursery stories, enough, as Miss Hoyden says in the play, ' to make one ashamed before one's love.' "

LADY MARY COKE was the youngest of the Duke of Argyll's five daughters ; that is, a cousin of Lord Bute's, though Lady Louisa always called her " Aunt." Her voluminous journal was privately printed, 9 vols., 1889-1895, by the Earl of Home : edited by the Hon. James Home.

LADY MONTAGU, the daughter of Lord Douglas and his wife, Lucy, daughter of the Duke of Montrose, married the second son of the Duke of Buccleuch, who was her stepmother's nephew, as Lord Douglas' second wife was LADY FRANCES SCOTT, the Duke's sister, and grand-daughter of the Duke of Argyll.

Lady Montagu was the author of *Trevelyan* (see p. 246), and lived at " Ditton Park."

LOUISA CLINTON was the eldest daughter of General Sir William Clinton (a distinguished Peninsula officer) and Lady Louisa Holroyd (the "LADY LOUISA" of the Letters), younger daughter of the first Earl of Sheffield.

She was born in 1797, and died, unmarried, in 1854—three years after Lady Louisa. They first met in 1815.

THE AUTHOR'S "CHARACTER" OF HERSELF

CHARACTER AND PORTRAIT OF IANTHE¹

NATURE has not shown much partiality towards Ianthé in the formation of her features, which, as they are singular and disagreeable, take from her all pretensions to beauty. Her complexion is brown, her eyes small, her nose large and ill-shaped, her mouth wide, and her teeth passable. Her countenance expresses some degree of sense, but indicates no peculiar sweetness. Her person is well-proportioned yet awkward, her stature about the middle size, her air ungraceful, and, in short, neither her figure nor her face qualified to attract admiration. This gives her no uneasiness, for she feels little solicitude concerning outward beauty, not because she wants vanity, but because it is generally directed to another object—*her understanding*. This indeed she frequently carries to so ridiculous a height that she renders the small portion of good sense she really possesses almost

¹ *i.e.* herself. See her later comments thereon, in letter to Miss Clinton, 1822, p. 196.

useless. Her imagination being lively and her comprehension quick, she soon becomes acquainted with the outside of things, but wanting both application and *judgment*, she seldom makes any farther progress. Her knowledge is therefore trifling and superficial, notwithstanding her secret propensity to assume that character which the world calls in derision *a learned lady*. She loves conversation, yet seldom shines in it, as she can talk upon very few subjects either with ease or propriety: in mixed companies she appears entirely at a loss. She feels no eagerness to enter them, or to partake of the fashionable amusements. Her chief pleasures are reading and writing. She rather prefers the latter to the former, and takes great but unsuccessful pains to arrive at elegance of stile. She looks upon the learned and the witty with unusual reverence, and almost worships the name of a favourite author. Her passionate fondness for poetry, her enthusiastic regard for anything which claims any relation to that art, and her strong partiality towards a country which she never saw, often renders her the object of ridicule amongst her acquaintance who call her romantic and singular. She feels the utmost respect for religion, her heart is good, her disposition sincere, candid and friendly. She has much pride, particularly concerning her birth and family, but though apt to swell with

satisfaction at the recollection of her own dignity, she is utterly unable to maintain it in a proper manner. Of a temper easily incensed, yet what is called good-humoured, commonly, in high spirits, and a great lover of mirth. Neither curious, malicious, nor censorious, not inclined to love money, nor eager about the ornaments of her person. In short, the portrait cannot be more justly concluded than by the following lines, which I have frequently applied to characterise Ianthe :

With pleasures too refined to please,
With too much spirit to be e'er at ease,
With too much quickness ever to be taught,
With too much thinking to have common thought.
Pope's *Essay on Women*.

LETTERS

To Lady Caroline Dawson

WHARNCLIFF, 3rd July 1778.

I have this moment received your dear, delightful, long letter, and in the transports of my gratitude for it, cannot help being angry with myself for grumbling so much in my last. Thank you a thousand times ; I wish I had anything to say which would repay you ; but though I foresee this will be an immense packet, I fear it will not give you the pleasure yours has done me. You have no notion what a delight only one day of your company would be to me just now, or how it would increase my enjoyments ; I want nothing but you to share them with me, and I think you could to the full extent.

Never tell me of your Welsh scenes. What a view might Mr. Dawson or you take from this window ! This spot is really a paradise, and I only regret that I cannot possibly find words to describe it well enough to give you the least idea of its beauty, or to justify myself for talking a little wildly upon the subject ; but you have so often seen me in raptures at the idea of such scenes as these, that you will not wonder if the reality almost

turns my brain. This dear little cottage is placed, like an eagle's nest, upon the very summit of a steep rock, which is entirely covered with wood, and the trees grow almost close to the walls ; we are not four yards from the edge, and if we should tumble out of our uppermost window, might have a good chance for rolling down the whole way. I cannot tell you what the prospect is, it extends so far and has such variety, but the most striking beauty consists in two valleys, one cultivated and divided into small fields with patches of wood intermixed with farmhouses, the other covered on both sides to a vast height with woods, the river running in the bottom, of which you only catch a glimpse here and there as the trees will let you. My mother tells me it falls in cascades in several places ; beyond these valleys, and the hill that divides them, the vast moors rise one above another. But remember I have yet only seen everything faintly, for we arrived here yesterday after lying at Sheffield, and it has rained to-day as hard as it could pour. A gleam of sunshine invited us out after dinner, but when we had rambled to a good distance from the house, the rain began again, and by the time we got home we were wet to the skin, and met all the family coming here to meet us, on foot and on horseback, with every kind of cloak and covering you can conceive ; you never saw so droll a scene. I am in such haste, and have so many things to say, that I believe I am very incoherent ; but no matter, I am almost as pleased with the house as the place.

My mother talked of it as such a wretched hovel that I was surprised to find it so well as it is. We have each a bedchamber, and there is a room decently hung with old tapestry to dine and sit in. What can one desire more? To say the truth, it is a farm-house, and has very little furniture, but yet the old housekeeper keeps everything so nicely clean and neat that it puts me in mind of descriptions in romances where you meet with cottages belonging to shepherds and shepherdesses. I do assure you I never saw any place like it in this respect, and I would sooner lay my cap upon the floor here than upon a chair at Luton. All my mother has told us of Yorkshire cleanliness seems to be true. She laughs at me for my raptures, but I am much mistaken if you would not join with me in preferring this cottage and situation to any great house and fine park we know. I had pictured the rocks and hills to myself so often that they only answer my expectation; but the woods surprise me most; they are immense beyond imagination, and besides the greatness of the scene, the whole country looks so much more fertile, more *riant* than any I have ever seen; it seems so populous and the inhabitants look so contented, that, in short, what would I give to have you here!

We went (in a chaise) to the Hall House [Wortley Hall] this morning. It is a pretty place, and I should have thought the view very fine if I had not come from hence. The house is ill contrived, but might be made comfortable. I forgot to tell you

about our journey. We lay two nights on the road in vile inns, but I persuaded my mother to go and see Hardwicke, where Queen Mary was confined so long, and where there is a room furnished with her work. It is a noble old house, everything remaining in the state it was in her time, and the old magnificence preserved with great care ; think how I was delighted, and not less with the park, though that seems neglected ; you look down from a steep bank of wood upon a noble river. Our first day's journey was through a frightful country in general, but we passed by several pretty parks. Nottingham is beautifully seated upon the Trent, which runs through lovely meadows, and the Duke of Newcastle's castle stands upon a high rock. The road from Mansfield here was delightful.

4th July.

I took such a ramble this morning ! over hill and dale, rock and cliff, and I may add through mud and mire, but attained my end at last, and got down to the river, which I found a broader stream than I could have thought ; but, indeed, it may well look narrow from hence, for I suppose we are three or four hundred feet above it. Most of my way was through the wood, and much like a steep staircase to go down, for I stepped and sometimes jumped from one great stone to another (by the help of a good stick that I had the wisdom to buy at Sheffield). The river roars among a noble collection of these stones, and upon one of them I sat down at its

brink, and began wishing for you once more. I could have stayed there for ever, but I found it was time to wade and clamber up again, so came home heartily tired, to give an account of my travels to my mother, who had had her people of business. We have been at Wentworth House this evening, and dine to-morrow at Wentworth Castle. You shall have an account of both. My mother told you how Mrs. Charles Stuart left us. She has had two letters from her, the first thinking her mother at the point of death, but in the second she says she is better. I fear she is not well herself, poor thing. She told me she intended to send your picture by means of Mrs. H. Hobart, but I daresay her present distress allows her no time to think of it.

My mother is exceedingly well, and not the worse for last night's expedition. Adieu, and God bless you! I have hardly any ink, and can scarce scratch out even this vile scrawl. When shall I write you a decent common sense letter? Adieu once more.—Yours ever affectionately, L. S.

To Lady Caroline Dawson

WHARNCLIFF, 7th July 1778.

DEAREST SISTER,—I hope now to give you a plainer account of myself than I did in my last piece of incoherent nonsense, which was written by scraps at different times, almost always in a violent hurry, and when I had no great plenty of materials. I write, you must know, upon a chest, for I am not

worth a table, but I have no less than three chairs, and there are window seats besides, so that article is nobly supplied. However, I would give up all these conveniences to stay here a fortnight longer, for I find my mother talks of returning next Monday, and as she writ to my father yesterday, I suppose she fixed herself as usual to a day, so you see you was mistaken in fancying our stay was to be prolonged. I fear this excursion will prove to me what a journey to London is to a country miss, whom it spoils for all enjoyment of the place she goes back to. It is impossible I can ever like Luton after being accustomed to such glorious scenes as these, but (by the way) I had a hint given me last night that I was to keep my sentiments upon that point to myself, and not seem too much delighted with this country when I returned. *Entre nous*, I suspect I shall not be the only person who will have occasion for reserve, for I am much mistaken if my mother would not, by giving way to her secret inclinations, be extremely fond of this place, I mean of Wortley, for she is not partial to a wild scene as I am ; she likes very much to talk over the situation, and form plans to make the house comfortable, and is always saying with how little trouble the grounds might be laid out in a pretty manner, and how she could manage it if she lived here. I need not add that she is in exceeding good spirits.

I received a letter from Mrs. Stuart last night ; her mother, she says, is still in the same dreadful condition, lifted in and out of bed by four people,

and wishes so much to be released herself, that she (Mrs. Stuart) is almost forced to wish it too. She seems very miserable indeed, yet appears to hope that Gen. Howe has brought good news with him, of which I heard nothing, though Lord Strafford told us he was certainly arrived. We dined at Wentworth Castle, as I mentioned we should in my last, and were received, as you may suppose, with every kind of civility. I owe you a list of my remarks upon that place and Lord Rockingham's, and you shall have them, such as they were, made on the spot, though you will not think my opinion good for much perhaps. Wentworth House, upon the whole, disappointed me; I had so often heard of it as one of the noblest houses in England, that I did not think it answerable to that idea. It is, I daresay, one of the largest, and the front is most magnificent, whether beautiful or not I am no judge, but I thought it striking altogether; but for the inside, it really does not seem answerable. Except a very fine hall, adorned with a composition that imitates marble of all colours, and two or three more rooms which are quite unfinished, I saw no fine spaces. The rooms on the ground floor are low and dark, and the furniture by no means magnificent. The worst of all is the situation. Should you think it possible that in this country of *prospects*, where one would think it required uncommon care to pick out a spot without one, anybody could build so vast a house directly behind a huge hill? This hill the present

lord has half cut away, and is going on, but a great deal more must be done before the view is opened. I saw no more of the place than what appeared from the road leading to the house, and that seemed to be very formal and old-fashioned. Wentworth Castle is not so large, but looks more convenient, and there are some very fine rooms in it (a gallery of 180 feet, for example), all very handsomely furnished, and it commands an exceeding pretty view. I have no time to enter into particulars of the place, but altogether it pleased me extremely, though I did not like the water, which, though *serpentine*, does not look natural; and then there is a kind of canal that comes across down to it that has an ill effect. At Lord Rockingham's I saw no water, but a string of fishponds. Both places have a vast number of ornamental buildings, pyramids, ruins, temples, etc., which adorn the whole country, and are finely seen from Wortley. I forgot to say we were at church on Sunday, and had a very good sermon from an honest, plain man, just the right kind of country clergyman. Well (as Miss Mure says), what else shall I tell you? Instead of being less delighted as the novelty wears off, I am more and more charmed with this country every day, and really think I was made for it. If you did but see me rambling over the rocks! I take delightful walks when my mother has business, and we generally drive out once a day, but for my misfortune, we have no equipage except the great rumbling coach and four, and as we go as slow as possible, this

would be a bad diversion if the views were less beautiful. Yesterday we were at the forges ; I cannot say I took so much pleasure in seeing them as their situation, which is lovely indeed, upon the bank of the river, under a hill covered with wood. The park here is all covered with vast stones, and yet the turf may vie with any garden, and, neglected as it is, you very seldom see a thistle or a nettle, though quantities of ferns and heath ; there are no flints, which makes the walking very good. We have had the finest warm weather imaginable, so I am no judge of that point, but I am tempted to suspect this country is not so cold as Bedfordshire, though perhaps it may be pretty sharp on the ridge of this rock. I believe the fruit is forwarder, for when we first came we had very good cherries, and yet there was not one ripe in the garden at Luton. I have got yours of the 28th, and delight in your descriptions ; but I would not for a hundred pounds have your letter intercepted, and your wicked remarks upon your country neighbours shown to the world—good people who, I daresay, are as civil and as friendly as one could desire, and try to cram you with their feasts, and have all their love and kindness repaid thus. Fie upon you ! Yet I must own your description of the *temple by the waterside* is admirable, as well as that of Lady Jane's two friends, Mrs. C. and Lady M., in your former letter. Pray tell me how you like Miss Dawson, for when you get this letter you will have had time enough to know. I am sorry you have

so great a neighbourhood, and that you find it the custom to be *good neighbours*, as they call it ! but it certainly is a judgment upon you for your intolerable yawnings at Luton ; it has been decreed that since you wanted company you shall have enough. I suppose Lady Lothian and Lady Emily will come to that dear place when we go back, and probably Mrs. Charles Stuart again, if Lady Vere dies. The other Mrs. Stuart [wife of her brother James] is at Southampton, and for Lady Mary Lowther [her eldest sister], God knows what she is doing, for she has not writ to either of us these three weeks. Indeed, we hardly hear from anybody, and have no newspapers, so that it is just the peaceful retirement you read of in romances, and we both agree that we feel as if we had been settled here for six months, and did so before we had lived here two days. My mother is now employed with her steward, who has dined with us two or three times, and is the most stupid, disagreeable fellow you ever saw. He seems to put her out of all patience. I never mentioned two Vandykes at Wentworth House, of which there are copies at Wentworth Castle, both of the great Earl of Strafford, one whole length in armour with a dog, the other sitting in a black gown and dictating to a secretary. This last is a famous picture. Both have expressive countenances. Lady Mary has sent a letter to my mother at last, where she says she was at liberty to come to Luton just when we left it, and for news, madam, Sir George Osborn is to marry Lady

Heneage Finch, with a long story that *she* proposed to *him* ; this I take to be trumped up by the *sisterhood* in order to account for his being so soon comforted after Mrs. Lockhart's cruelty, as it seems Lady Heneage refused him long ago, and now sends a message to say she has been enamoured of him ever since, which is a probable story. I am as usual ashamed to send such a heap of nonsense, but it has been scrawled by three or four lines at a time, in as many days, so it is little better than a paper of memorandums ; and your Ladyship must also excuse the inequality of *size*, in consideration of my poverty. I shall write no more till I get to Luton. I am sorry to say we set out on Monday (this is Friday), and bid farewell to this lovely place, where, besides its beauty, we have lived in as *comfortable* a manner as you can conceive. There is a bookcase among other things, so we are at no loss in an evening, and the weather has been glorious ; you would have enjoyed it extremely. Adieu, my love ; pray continue to write me full accounts.—Your ever affectionate

L. STUART.

To Lady Caroline Dawson

LUTON, 15th July 1778.

DEAR SISTER,—The first thing I have to tell you is that we returned to this place yesterday evening (lying only one night upon the road, which was at Leicester), and found everything as we left it, or a

little altered for the worse, for the country is quite burnt up, and half the flowers are gone, so that it has but a dismal appearance ; indeed, I believe I look upon it with an evil eye, but I shall talk more of that when I have thanked you, my dear, for yours of the 5th, which I found here ; they told me they had sent one letter to Wharncliffe ; I hardly think it can be from you, so shall patiently expect its return. I do acknowledge that you are very good to me, very good indeed, but my complaints were reasonable when they were made, so I do not deserve to be scolded. I think you seem in a way to grow very comfortable, and am happy to think it ; I am glad too (by the way) to remember your cold constitution ; for they give most dreadful accounts of the heat at London, and even here, though we have felt no more than was agreeable in the temperate regions where we have been. I think I understand pretty well how you stand with regard to Miss Dawson. I was sorry when I heard she meant to stay in Ireland, and had a dispute about it with my mother, who fancied it would be pleasant to you to have somebody who knew the neighbours, but I insisted that Mr. Dawson (my love to him) was a sufficient introducer. I rejoice to find the ghosts are departed, or, if you will, laid, for though they may be peaceable, they can't be pleasant, and now you have the house to yourselves, you may perhaps make it comfortable ; at worst, it surely is not such a scene of inconvenient melancholy magnificence as another [*i.e.* Luton] that shall be nameless,

or else every unlucky fatality attends you ; the place you describe is very agreeable and pretty. Pray let me have a full description of your *fête champêtre*.

When I came in last night they gave me three letters from Lady Jane Macartney [her second sister, then at Grenada], but I was very much disappointed to find two of them only copies of another, with duplicates of a bill for fifty pounds upon Coutts, and the third a vast packet filled with letters to other people, and but a short one to myself, dated 22nd of April, all about business. It came by Evans, whom she has sent over, and desires me to recommend ; seven guineas and a half are for her, to be due on the first of November, thirty for Nurse Spence, and three for the woman at Copthall, which I shall not pay, but do as you did last year.

The rest is to pay you, if she owes you anything, or else to be kept till another opportunity ; therefore, my dear sister, will you send me your bill, for, if I remember right, you paid a good deal. She sends a very good character to be given Evans, but desires that none of us will take her (particularly Lady Mary Lowther), and that we will not believe anything she says about her or Grenada. I am glad she is rid of her. Now I must indulge myself in talking a little of my beloved Yorkshire ; I hope you are not quite sick of the subject, for you must not expect to hear the last of it this great while, though it appears at present more as if I had had a very pleasant dream, than as if I had really been a

hundred and fifty miles from this place. But you cannot conceive with what dislike I return to it. You yourself never hated it more heartily, and never despised it so much ; you have no idea how little it appears to me, and how compleatly uncomfortable I feel in this great house, after being so much the contrary in our dear little clean, neat cottage at Wharncliff, where we really lived in quite a pastoral manner. I never think of it but as the abode of peace and content, for it is exactly the retirement you sometimes see described in a romance, where travellers driven in by a storm find a happy family and a place that they think a paradise. 'Tis true we are quite solitary and quiet enough here, but it is with a mixture of melancholy and stateliness, while there we seemed to be in a retreat from all care and anxiety, just what poets are always talking of, though I never saw their descriptions realised before. I doubt you will laugh at my style of admiration and delight, but I will defy you and go on. I could scribble for three hours upon the beauty of that place. I believe I used to sit for as long every day upon the edge of the highest rock eating up the prospect, and never took my eyes away without difficulty, such a scene of wood as you look down upon, such variety in the shape of the hills, such cultivation in the valleys, such a cheerfulness in the whole ! and then such an extent of country as comes at once under your eye, and everywhere such an appearance of fertility, quantities of cottages, all neatly built of stones, and

seeming clean and comfortable within, the children playing about them, not the miserable, pining, ragged, poor little creatures you see in this country, but looking fat and healthy, and their fathers and mothers strong, handsome people, in general neatly dressed, and always employed.

I made many acquaintances among them in my rambles, and diverted myself very much, for they have a great deal of character, an original simplicity, and yet an awkward sort of shyness, that makes them very entertaining. There I could travel about without any fears, for you meet nobody but these honest people ; no London gentry, no sturdy beggars. I cannot help saying a word of my dear Rocks ; those at Wharncliff are beautiful, especially where the cleft is, which they call the Dragon's Den ; they are tumbled about in the most romantic confusion, the bushes of birch, hazel, holly, mountain ash, etc., growing among them, and really upon them, and all these great stones twined round with the finest wild honeysuckles I ever saw. Under this rock there is a green walk about a yard wide upon the edge of another covered with wood to the bottom, and this noble wood can't be less than two or three miles in length. It is chiefly oak and ash, but there is fine birch intermixed, and some old yews, [a] good deal of holly among the underwood, which has a good effect as you look down ; even the quantities of fern and heath add to the beautiful wildness. My mother has another vast wood called Softly, which joins to Wharncliff, another beautiful

bank opposite to that, called the Forge Rocker, where the tin mill and forges are placed, the river running in the bottom, and fronting to it a vast hill without trees, the rocks towering over it. I shut my eyes and delight to fancy I am up on the spot. I am a fool for trying to describe it, but it is a pleasure to me to think it all over again ; I dare say I shall never like any place so well. You may believe I was sorry enough to leave it. I got up at five o'clock, and walked to all my favourite places. It was a lovely morning, and I thought everything more charming than I had ever seen it (for I always found I liked it better and better every day). At last my mother sent for me, and a little after six we set out, she laughing at me for looking doleful, and advising me to choose a Yorkshire husband. Now the Luton influence has seized me, and I am half in the vapours already, what with the place itself and the politics I hear talked. My father has got a bad swelled face, and keeps his room. My mother is very well, but still a little tired. She was not the least so when she went, but coming back the heat was excessive, and the dust, for the four or five last stages, intolerable. We dined at Derby the day before yesterday, where the river Derwent is very beautiful, and runs among fine meadows. We went to see the silk mill and the great church, which is very handsome, with several tombs of the Devonshire family, particularly Bess of the Hardwicks. Leicester, where we lay, is a large ugly town in a frightful flat country. Northampton-

shire is almost as bad, and the part of Bedfordshire you come through worse than either, though you go by Woburn, which seems a fine place.

My mother does not seem to think my father's complaint anything but a swelled face ; he sits in the library with all the windows and doors close shut, which in just such weather as this would even suffocate you, and I daresay makes him worse. She says it quite overcomes her. Frederick and William [her brothers] came here about five minutes after we came, and the latter looks much better, but I only see them at meals.

Pray, my dear sister, let me have a very, very long letter from you, for it will be a great comfort now I am forlorn and peevish in this. But I will make no more invectives. I assure you I feel as far from you as you can do from us, and have great reason to feel it, for your letters are an age in coming ; yet I am happy to think you are much more comfortable than you would be here. Pray mention if you have heard anything of poor little Stuart.¹ Adieu, my love, the post waits.

To Lady Caroline Dawson

LUTON, *Tuesday, 21st July 1778.*

DEAREST SISTER,—You need not be at all afraid that I should think your journal an odd composition. I am so much charmed with it that I long for the

¹ Her nephew Stuart, afterwards Archdeacon Corbet ; at this time in the care of Mrs. Middleton, bedchamber woman to Princess Amelia.

second part, and want to see the characters you have painted in action ; but I pity you for being forced to spend so much of your time in visiting and playing at cards by daylight ; however, I know you can make everything afford you some diversion or other, and I hope you are attended by your usual good spirits. I wish you would explain yourself a little more about the illness you talk of, for you are not apt to consult physicians for nothing, and you do not say whether the bath has been of service to you. I wish to hear a good reason for all this. I am not at all surprised at your horsemanship ; I always thought you would take the first opportunity to ride, and as Mr. Dawson seems to be your only companion, I suppose it is the most comfortable time you have. How do the rest of the family go on ? are they grown fond of you ? Does Mr. Joseph open his lips oftener than he did in town, and is he kind or cruel to the lady who admires him ? For my part, I am sufficiently accustomed to dumb people, for here are Frederick and William who speak about six words a day, and instead of being any company or comfort, only serve to give me the vapours by walking up and down the room without ceasing ; don't think I mean my room, for I assure you they never deign to visit that, but after tea, as my father and mother always retire to the library, I have brought down my work and sat with these two gentlemen to try if any acquaintance could be made with them, and as I tell you, I am entertained with their eternally walking backwards

and forwards, or now and then flinging themselves upon the couch, yawning, and asking me questions as "When we go to London?" "When you come back?" "Whether the Duchess of Portland comes here this year?" and so forth. Sometimes, indeed, they have got into a dispute, but otherwise I give you an exact description how our evening passes till there is a joyful acclamation at the sound of the supper bell. The rest of the day is employed as usual in trailing to the farm and dawdling to the flower garden; but bad as it is, it will be worse when they go, for they at least enliven our meals a little. My father still complains of a pain in his face, is out of spirits, and has not dined with us since we came back. Poor William, too, after looking ill these three days had a return of his headache yesterday, though before he seemed better than I had yet seen him. My mother is well and in very good spirits, considering the *ennui* that I believe is inseparable from this house, and which I own has at last infected me. I have often told you, though you knew it pretty well, you could not conceive it thoroughly except you could conceive the family too, without yourself. There is a journal in return for yours. Lady Mary writes that she is kept in town (heartily sick of it) waiting for Sir James Lowther. Poor Mrs. Stuart is still in the same way; she tells me she never goes to bed without expecting to hear Lady Vere is dead when she gets up, and what with the melancholy scene, and want of sleep in a hot, close room,

her spirits are sunk to such a degree that she can hardly write. It is now very near a month since poor Lady Vere has been lying in this manner between life and death, which is really dreadful. I flatter myself, my dear sister, you will continue to write as often as you can, for it is, I assure you, a charity. You never mention any of your English friends. Do you often hear from Lady Frances, Lady Lucy, Mrs. Legge, Miss Herbert, and what are they doing? If you still think of coming back through Scotland, pray let it be part of your plan to go and see Wharncliffe, which by the bye I have not forgotten, though the wise old proverb "You cannot eat your cake and have your cake" ought to silence me. Lady Lothian, I fancy, means to pay us a visit soon.

To Lady Bute

BOTHWELL CASTLE, 5th August 1783.

Very little or rather nothing worth mentioning has passed, my dear mother, since I concluded my last. The retirement in which we live, the silence of the place, and perhaps the situation (upon a ridge), almost reminds me of your cottage in Yorkshire, though the view there is more extensive, and in all respects but one much fairer and the mansion something less. This house consists of a body and two wings; the first (very old and tottering) contains only, besides servants' and children's rooms, three spare bedrooms and one dressing-closet, which as

the state apartment falls to my share ; in one of the last are the offices ; and in the other (built by the Duke or Duchess of Douglas) a large dining-room and a moderate sized drawing-room below stairs, and above, an apartment for themselves. This is the sum total, so you will not wonder that Mr. D. should be impatient to build. His design, I find, is to leave the wings standing, which, of course, will contract and to some degree embarrass his plan, but considerably lessen the expense of his undertaking, and when completed will be more a comfortable living house than by any means a fine one. The place is rough and ill kept, but perhaps loses none of its beauty by that circumstance ; it looks immediately down a steep bank upon the fine windings of the river Clyde, overhung on each side by hills covered with wood, and (at a stone's-throw from the house) by the beautiful remains of the old castle, which appears most noble when seen first from the opposite shore, standing upon a high woody bank, and half encompassed by the river. It has been a great pile of building, parts apparently more ancient than the rest, and it is easy to distinguish the chapel and the great hall, now containing a little grove of trees, that threaten to weigh down a vault that supports them, and hasten the fall of the edifice. In one large and very high tower there remains entire a steep winding staircase, which leads you to the very top, and up it you may be sure I have scrambled. I was repaid by a lovely prospect of the river, and a fine rich

enclosed country, many miles in extent, the steeples of Glasgow very visible, and I suppose many other objects in clear weather. Directly fronting Bothwell stands Blantyre Castle, another but a much smaller ruin, rising from amongst wood, and looking infinitely higher than it is, because built upon a perpendicular rock of its own red colour, which is not to be distinguished from it. You may imagine what the effect of such ornaments must be, bordering such a river. Blantyre is called a castle, but said to have been a priory, and according to custom, the country people believe in a subterraneous passage between it and the other under the bed of the Clyde. We have taken several rambles under Mr. Douglas's direction, to the great detriment of our shoes and petticoats, for the climate of this country you know is wet, and the soil a stiff clay, which can never be otherwise ; nor does the country produce gravels or anything fit to make walks except the river sand. We ferry over in a boat, but can do no more, as it is seldom free from stones for a hundred yards together ; if it were, it would be delightful to row down it. There are marks of the height to which it has risen at different times, some very surprising, and whenever this happens I need not say it tears down its banks and destroys the paths made by its side—one reason why they are in a rough condition. The woods are all upon declivities, and beautiful to the eye, and the plantations healthy and thriving, but we have not many good single trees. The best are oaks. No Duke

H[amilton] has yet appeared at these gates, nor is there any sign that he will—I fancy his Grace is wiser when drunk than when sober, as he promised it to the Ad. ! [Admiral ?] at a great dinner in the race week, when they were very *notorious*, as Mrs. Mure says. Probably the Ad.'s persuasions prevailed upon him at the time, and his pride has risen since to prevent them from taking effect.

Wednesday the 6th.

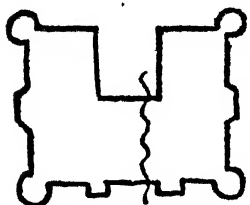
Our solitude is interrupted to-day by Lady E. Home and Miss Clementina Elphinstone, who come from Hamilton full of all its gaieties and pleasures, and in love with both Duke and Duchess, but especially with the latter. They have had a very large company at their races (all lodged in the house), abundance of beaux, and dancing every night. The Duke and Mr. Baird rid their own horses. The Duke won the match, etc. etc. etc. The only person *déplacé* was Lord Morton, who indeed, by all accounts, appears to be an insupportable animal ; they describe him as herding altogether with the women, not out of gallantry, but as if he had been a woman himself, for the pleasure of showing . . .

To Lady Bute

DOUGLAS CASTLE, 29th August 1783.

We had as unfavourable a day for the first view of this place as 'tis possible to conceive, alternately thick fog and drizzling rain, but excepting some

beautiful country about Hamilton, there was not much to see upon the road (by the way the distance is but two-and-twenty miles), and the scenery here consists of only one high purple hill above another. The house stands in a small valley surrounded by these moors, and is pretty well sheltered by trees. You know I can endure a black mountain with more patience than most people, so upon the whole I do not think the situation so disagreeable as it was described to be, but you must read this with



allowances for my particular taste. The house itself is a great piece of a great building which, were it finished, could make a noble appearance. If you will not laugh at me for pre-

tending to draw a plan, I will try to give an idea of it thus. This part only is finished, and contains certainly room enough to lodge a considerable family, but there would be no possibility of completing it to the eye without executing the original plan or one as large. It is built in the Gothick style, of a fine white stone, and the rooms are both good and convenient, but neither painted nor papered, and of course scarcely at all furnished. You may suppose the grounds are not in any sort of keeping, but Mr. Douglas is making very great plantations. We find ourselves in so different a climate that we are well contented to spend our evenings over an excellent

fire : the weather indeed has been much cooler ever since I wrote to you last, and a great deal of rain has fallen ; yet we are seldom thoroughly rid of a fog. However, we were lucky enough to have a fine day (as days go) to see the Falls of Clyde at Bonnington, with which I was delighted beyond conception : I shall not attempt to describe a scene so much above my pen, the finest I have seen since I came to Scotland (indeed ever in my life), uniting rock, wood, and water in the utmost perfection.

30th.

I had no time to say more of the Falls of Clyde, being summoned to breakfast, immediately after which we took flight, the races being at twelve and the course ten miles off. We had company in the house, two gentlemen of Angus, a Captain Milne and a Mr. Graham of Fintry, who (the last I mean) is one of the most polished and gentlemanlike men I have seen in Scotland, and besides them Mr. Douglas the younger (the Duchess's heir, a genteel-looking youth of eighteen) and Mr. MacConochy, the agent, factor, or whatever the word is, an old family piece of furniture, rather than break whose heart we consented to dine at the ordinary, which he assured us was expected by all the ladies, and could not be avoided without giving offence. But when it came to the point, behold there was not a female but ourselves, for not expecting any such condescension, the few ladies who were upon the course had taken themselves away, and left us to

our great joy, freed from half of the day's burthen ; the other half were dining with about a dozen squires of no very charming appearance, but we made short work of it, and escaped long before the horses were ready to carry us away, leaving the good company to get drunk unrestrained. Mr. Douglas, you must know, was steward of the meeting, therefore toast-master at dinner, and we expected to see little more of him or his friends that night ; however, they returned before nine o'clock in a very decent condition, after being elected Burgesses and putting on their hats with much ceremony. The strangers are now gone as well as poor Mr. MacConochy, who was provoked beyond measure by yesterday's desertion, swore he would have no more to do with races, wished the town at the D——, cursed the Provost for a stupid old blockhead, and used a stronger expression of goodwill to the ladies who had proved his promises vain. We flatter ourselves they have all gone to this day's dinner in their best array, for we have had a very comfortable *tête-à-tête*, but the two Mr. Douglasses are not come home to tell us the news.

This morning's diversion was near proving very unpleasant ; one of the horses threw his rider (which was a frightful thing to see, but fortunately the jockey escaped unhurt), then raced round the course alone, and coming up first, ran in among the crowd, and trampled down a woman before he was stopped. Lady Frances was going so fast into hystericks, that I never felt much more terri-

fied in my life. I sent the servant for Mr. Douglas, who came up immediately, and assured us that nobody had been the least hurt, and that the woman was quite safe, of which in a little while repeated accounts convinced us, and she got the better of her fright ; as you will see, for she is scribbling to you at this moment.

The servant has just told me very bad news of the post ; it goes out to-night, but he says my letter will reach England as soon, if it is sent from Bothwell on Tuesday : this really vexes me, for I fear that being ten days without hearing from me will either give you uneasiness or make you think me very careless and inattentive, but I have some hopes that you will sa (*sic*) what I told you of our intended excursions, and guess some part of the true reason. If I had had a notion that the post here was so irregular and went out so seldom, I would have written a few lines before I came, though with ever so small a fund of materials. I am a little disturbed that among the letters just come from Bothwell there is none for me, which obliges me to wait for our return, for we shall have no more sent to us. Adieu for to-night.

To Lady Bute

BOTHWELL CASTLE, 14th September 1783.

Lady Harriet, Sir Alexander, and Lady Betty [Cunningham] arrived on Thursday, and the same day, unexpectedly, Mr. Shaw Stewart, and a Mr.

Macdowal, who seems to have formed himself upon the pattern of Shakespeare's Malvolio and conned state without book. I did not think the house could possibly have held so many people, and it is with much contrivance and inconvenience, but they drank their bottles and did not care. My old acquaintance Lady Harriet has lost a good many of her charms since I saw her—her outward charm I mean ; she has grown extremely large and coarse, and looks by no means young, but her pleasing countenance remains, and her mind does not seem the worse for wear. Sir A., too, has become fat and clumsy ; his appearance is rather squire-like, yet there is something better within, if I am to believe Lady Harriet's friends, who tell me he has parts, good-nature, and a turn to a many little agreeable accomplishments, provided a glass of generous wine, as they call it, does not come too often in his way. Lady Harriet surprises me by saying she has been here with the Duchess of Douglas¹ (who lived here till she died), and I am not a little entertained with some anecdotes she told me this morning of the Douglas cause. The Duchess, she said, after warming herself with a cup or two after supper, began one night to talk very freely of her own life and adventures, among other things relating her marriage with the Duke, their parting reconciliation, but when she came to the great point, she declared she always favoured Mr.

¹ Margaret Douglas of Mains married the Duke in 1758, and died 1774.

Douglas ; but what gave her first a desire of supporting him to the utmost was a visit she made to the Duchess of Argyle, whom she found lolling in her usual nonchalante manner upon a settee, and beating the Devil's tattoo with one leg over the other. Down she set herself opposite, and for some time tried to enter into conversation, till at last, tired with the other's careless, contemptuous manner and impertinent answers, " I looked her," said she, " in the face and thought to myself ! Ay ! play awa' with that bonny fit ! Play awaw and show your leg, and what a bonny ankle ye ha ! Gif my Duke were alive it micht cast dust in his e'en, but troth ! I am a woman like yoursell, and I 'll gar ye rue your wagging your fute at me ! " So much for old stories.

The oddest new one in these parts of the world is a whimsical action of Lord Marchmont, who has sent down his will to be registered (and of course made public) in the office at Edinburgh, for no visible reason but to enjoy the vexation he means it should cause in his lifetime. He leaves his fortune first to his eldest daughter and her heirs, and then to Lady Dy Scott and the children the hon. woman (who you know is old and almost dying) may have by any husband she shall marry after Mr. Scott's death, disinheriting all her present family, both sons and daughters, to the uttermost. Then goes on to entail it upon every relation he has, and at last ends with a proviso that if any person to whom, in course of time, that entail may convey

it happens to be of the name of Scott, they shall be without and for ever incapable of inheriting any part of his estate. They say it has had its full effect upon Lady Dy, and shocked her so cruelly that it is thought she will never recover it.—Your most dutiful and affectionate

L. S.

To Lady Carlow

LONDON, *Tuesday, 29th July (?) 1784.*

I prevailed on my mother to go to the play to-night. We carried Miss Bruhl, and Lady Frances and Mr. Douglas joined our party, which was made for the sake of *The Agreeable Surprise*,¹ the farce we have heard so much of and never seen. It is egregious nonsense, and yet makes one laugh more than all the wit in the world. The play was one of their summer pieces, fitter for a fair than a theatre, with everything that could be devised absurd and ridiculous. But for the farce, I believe I shall laugh these three days at the recollection of it. I went home and supped with the Duchess. They don't talk of leaving town yet. I was with Lady Jane for an hour. Miss Herbert came in and described to us a house she is about taking in Edward Street, Portman Square. It would be a very good one, she says, only the kitchen is as high as Westminster Hall, and fit for any use in the world but that of dressing her dinner, and the rooms have all run a race upstairs without any one being able

¹ A comedy by O'Keefe.

to catch the other, for there are no two exactly upon a floor, and yet no two upon distinct floors. This is her account of it. However, she has it for five and fifty pounds a year. It belongs to an old bachelor with £100,000, and we advised her to take the proprietor along with the house.

Thursday.

At Lady Jane [Macartney's] *tête-à-tête* except that Mrs. and Miss Cheap came in for a moment to show themselves dressed for the French Ambassador's ball. The girl looked extremely genteel and beautiful. Lady Jane has asked her to go to Tunbridge, and all the family are mightily pleased. My mother told me a pleasant mistake this morning. You know little William Wyndham's match. Lady E. took an opportunity when playing at cards with Lady Galloway, who is deaf, and Cordon, who could not understand her, to open it to Lady Aylesford by saying one of her family was soon to be married. "Lord," says the other, thinking of Lord E. or Percy, "I wish you joy with all my heart; well, I am vastly glad of it." "Nay," returns Lady E., "you need not be so glad, for I mean William." "William! and who is the lady?" "Why," says Lady E., "I believe it is a match your father, the proud Duke of Somerset, would hardly have supposed one of his grandsons to make. 'Tis (in a low voice) Miss Harford." "My father!" cries she; "I believe he would have been the only person who could truly have approved of it. What a strange thing of William!

and indeed I am a little amazed at her." "At her," answers Lady E.; "no, really I wonder *he* should like it, but don't in the least wonder she should." "Why, who did you say, and what do you mean?" And so they came to an explanation, and Lady Aylesford, not able to forbear laughing, exclaims, "Why, ay, I thought you mad when you said my father, who looked upon family as the only thing to be minded, would have disapproved of a Herbert."

Friday.

My father has not been well to-day—a little sort of a fever, but I hope it is only a cold. William wrote word that all the people about Luton have had such illness that he thinks himself well-off to be rid of his so soon. I went to Ranelagh to-night, *tête à tête* with Lady Mary, in obedience to her commands, which I hate of all things. I have nothing to tell you of it but that I was seized by a very drunken beau and kindly invited to drink coffee—fairly picked up, in short—a thing I had no notion one could possibly be exposed to there. Lady Mary chose to be violently frightened, and instead of walking quietly out of the man's way, would whisk backwards and forwards, and run about and stop everybody we met to tell the story. I could not help muttering that we had better not make people think we were drunk ourselves. Miss Herbert came to me for an hour this evening. She is off her bargain for the house because it is next door to a tallow chandler's.

Saturday.

My father is better to-day, and has dined with us. The weather is really growing fine and warm. Lady Jane has had all her rabble of school-boys with her this week, but she gets rid of them to-day. And now I believe I must make up my packet, for the coach will be ready presently. Adieu, and bless you all. Is not this a strange, scrambling, dry sort of letter? But you must forgive it, for I am *triste* and stupid.

Just come from Lady Courtown's, where we have had two Pelhams, the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, who are come to town for to-morrow's drawing-room and the French Ambassador's ball, the Duke of Montagu, Mrs. and Miss Brudenell, Lord Brudenell, and Lady Frances. Part of the company stayed supper, and Lord Stopford was placed at the head of the table to do the honours. He is taller, but otherwise very little altered, and as he used to be very like the King, Lady Frances tells his mother that many a poor good woman has lost her reputation upon much slighter grounds of suspicion than the likeness. She wants me to write a paragraph *animadverting* upon the resemblance of a certain young nobleman, lately arrived from abroad, to a certain illustrious personage, which is much the subject of discourse in all polite circles, and occasions remarks not highly to the advantage of a certain countess, and so send it to Lady Courtown as copied out of the newspapers. It being the part of a friend, etc., etc.

To Lady Carlow

LONDON, 22nd October 1784.

Thank God a thousand times, my dearest sister, for the good news we had of you yesterday, which Miss D[awson] confirms and adds to in a letter I have just got from her. I fear I must condole with you upon its being a daughter, as I suppose Lord Carlow will not be so well satisfied, but I hope he does not make a disappointment of it, and I own, provided you and the little thing are both safe and well, it signifies very little. They may all grow up and marry off your hands, and if so, daughters are less incumbrance to a family than sons. As for education, to be sure it makes that rather more difficult to have so many near the same age, but the more of either of them the greater the difficulty will be, and so I wish you would stop here. I write to you because, as the letters have been so long coming, you will be in your third week before you get this. Pray say something very civil to Miss Dawson from me. I shall write to thank her in due form, but as I rather expect another letter from her, I wait till it is come, that I may do it altogether, because I should think she would as lieve have one letter as two, the postage being really a serious thing now. Both she and Lord Carlow are so concise in their account that they don't say whether you were a short time or a long time in labour, or anything else but the bare fact, and I

really could have wished to hear some particulars, but I hope you despatched the business with ease as usual.

William came to town yesterday, looking better than I expected to see him, and very cheerful and merry. He is going to spend the winter at Bath, partly for health and partly for economy. I am glad of it, for it is much better than living by himself at Luton, not but what I am already so sick of this place that I would change with him. Really the *ennui* and melancholy of it is past conception, and when I think how long our winter is, I could cry. It is certainly lucky no good, sober farmer comes in my way, for I might not resist the temptation. I never felt the change from country to town so sensibly as an animal before. I have a constant weight on my head, and hardly feel alive, which, I suppose, is because I come from a remarkably fine air, and have used myself to be out all day long. My mother is *ennuyée* enough too, and there is nobody in town for her but Lady F. Medows. She was at Court yesterday (not I, for I could not get a hairdresser, and was glad to stay away), and to-day we have been paying a most formal awkward visit where we were not welcome, and I am sure had no business. It was to the Duchess of Argyll,¹ who is going to the south of France in a day or two for her health and Lady Augusta's—both look very ill.

¹ Elizabeth Gunning. Lady Augusta Campbell, her daughter, married General Clavering, and died 1831.

The Duchess of Ancaster was there and Lady Derby.

Adieu, my dearest Caroline, and God always bless you and your children. What name will you give the young one ?

I forgot to thank you for a letter I got from you since I wrote last, which had been in Yorkshire and was forwarded here. By that you had sent away your man in a wrong time, for I think you must have been brought to bed on the Sunday.

I wish you had made M[iss] D[awson] tell me all these things. My mother is writing to Lord Carlow. My love to him and congratulations.

To Lady Carlow

LONDON, 9th November 1784.

I am very glad to find by your letters to my mother and Lady Jane that you go on so well, and so well pleased with your new *olive branch*. I observe you say nothing about the business of suckling. I suppose if you have taken it upon yourself, you do not mention it for fear Lady Jane should be mortified about the nurse ; but don't think she will mind it. She is come to town very well, and continues to walk miles every morning, which she would fain make me do too, but till London is as clean as a green field, and as solitary, and as cheerful with fine sun and fresh air, I believe I shall be deaf to all her lectures. My father returned from High Cliffe yesterday, looking

charmingly, and admires to find London in the same fog he left it, for he says the weather has been delightful in Hampshire. So is it not here. I am sure I feel it in my head, and I don't fancy trudging about the dirty streets would remove the weight. I have increased it just now by curling my hair. Do you know poor Monge¹ died last week? I was very sorry for him, and at a great loss what to do. At last his nephew, your man, came to offer his services, and I think I shall fix with him. Those people ought not to wish for my custom, for I always bring them ill-luck. They either die or break as soon as I get used to them, and something of the same fatality attends my acquaintances; whenever anybody takes my fancy, and he begins to be intimate, some unforeseen event settles them, the Lord knows how or where, out of my reach. I don't remember if I said to you last summer that I was *going* to like Lady Murray, and intended trying to see more of her. This autumn, lo and behold, she has taken a sudden resolution to go back and live in Scotland, and decamps with bag and baggage this very week. She will be some time at Dalkeith.

To Lady Carlow

November 1784.

I begin upon this large sheet of paper because I reproach myself for doing so little to amuse you, now when you are solitary and (I much fear)

¹ Hairdresser.

melancholy ; and yet I lead so quiet a life, and have so little to say, that the Lord knows how I shall fill half of it. The news of the day will do nothing, for the day has no news, and my day would have none even if the town were fuller and livelier, but I will go back to the date of my last for my stupid insignificant journal. Saturday night I went to the play with Lady Macartney and Lady Mount Edgecumbe. My mother was to have been one of our party, but found another she liked better, and I could have done so too, easily, for I liked mine very ill, and grew heartily tired before a third of the play was over. Mrs. Abington acted, and Lady Macartney saw a number of her acquaintance in the house, which I did not do, according to custom. Lord Barrington, Lord Sefton, and Mr. Dillon were in the box, and I invited them down very kindly as soon as they came in, to secure the row immediately behind us. For you must know the last time we were at the play an officer made his appearance, either half drunk or half mad, sat down almost in my mother's lap, cocked his hat, and whispered first to Lady Mary and then to me. I once heard him utter an oath upon finding us both deaf, and as he had a stick in his hand, I was afraid he would have proceeded to make some use of it. But after pushing us, leaning over us, and playing a few more tricks, a gentleman in the box civilly desiring him to take off his hat, he thought fit to start up and go away. To be sure I need not be under any concern how to fill my paper if I make every foolish

story as long as I have done this. There is a knock at the door. Miss Herbert, I suppose. Old Catherine is with Lady Macartney, so she was to lend her to me. It was Miss Herbert. She has sold the lease of her house to her cousin Neville, and has his leave to live in it till Christmas into the bargain, so is no longer upon the *pavé*. Mrs. Dalrymple is in town for her confinement. She seems not to think Lord Herbert in so bad a way as I had heard he was. She is fat, and merry, and thoughtless as ever, has taken an aversion to the Duke of Ancaster and Lady H. Pitt, but made no new friendships at Brighton. She has nothing to do but bathe in the sea to get rid of all cares and vexations. She says I told her I had been bathing in the air, and that was as good. Last night Fish Crauford came, good-humoured and agreeable.

To Lady^{ms} Carlou

25th November 1784.

I have been lazy all this week, and neglected my journal till your letter came to rouse me. I can't say it pleases me, however, for I am grieved to hear your cold has lasted so long, and appeared in so many disagreeable shapes. I hope in God you are not ill otherwise, but I see it must have hindered you from recovering your strength after your lying in. Besides, it is so melancholy to be wrapped up and confined from one week to another without any company you like, that I hate to think of it.

For my part, I go on in the same solemn sadness at Lady Jane's every evening—no variety except that Tuesday I had Lady Emily [Macleod], who was in town for two days *en passant*. She is as big as if she were to have six children and produce them to-morrow, but looks remarkably well, and enquired a good deal after you and your nursery. I observe all you ladies who are often in that way yourselves grow very curious and inquisitive about one another, and desirous to know how such a one was brought to bed, and what sort of a child she has got, and whether she suckles it, and how it thrives, etc. etc. ; so it was not particular to Lady Mount [Stuart], whom we used to laugh at in former days for liking to talk of nothing but of lyings in, but the common infirmity of the sex. Lady E[gremond] has carried her little girl with her through all her rambles. They stayed a month at Bath, where they made a great acquaintance with Lord Herbert, and are quite charmed with him. By all I hear, he is not ill, but extremely lame, and they much fear his leg wastes away, which is a frightful thing. He is returned to Bath, and Lord and Lady Courtown are gone there, so they design to persuade Lady P[embroke] to come there when she has paid her duty at Windsor. It is the best thing she can do, as none of her friends will be in London. By the way, not one word from Lady Frances, I don't know why, but I have taken a fancy into my head that she is with child again, which I should be very sorry for, and she too, I believe. Miss Herbert has

charged me over and over again to tell you that Mrs Dalrymple was brought to bed last week of a fine boy, and that she cannot suckle it, all which she assured me you will think very interesting news, because of that natural curiosity I took notice of above. Ford said, "Pooh, what does she care for Mrs. Dalrymple and her child!" If it be so, thank her for it. Lady Mary has been lamenting over that lady's fate very seriously for some time, being sure she would die in the operation, and for a very curious reason, which diverted my mother exceedingly, and would you, only I don't think it quite fit to be communicated by the pen of a *spinster*. Her wisdom was mistaken, however, for Mrs. Dalrymple despatched the affair in as little time as ever you did, and with as little difficulty. This too Miss Herbert bade me be sure to tell you. She spent the evening with us yesterday. Her dear Colonel Cunningham is in town, and she has thoughts of settling at Slanes Castle. K. U., she says, sat with her for four hours the other morning, and at the end of their conversation told her that he thought he should never marry again, or something to that purpose. In short, she is persuaded she must be content to lead apes,¹ which she confesses she would rather not do, if it could be helped. Alas! I desired her to pluck up a spirit and say, as I was determined to do for the future, instead of I *can't* and I *shan't*, I *won't* marry. But she

¹ 'To die an old maid,' *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act ii. Sc. i.

seems by no means disposed to pronounce that word. She told me a story I thought good enough. Lady Caroline was persuading an old friend that had been her sister virgin to marry somebody who, she owned, would not have done for her formerly, but whom she ought to think now a very good match. "What!" says the other, "and do you think I have waited so long to take up with *him* at last?" I like this way of thinking mightily. To be sure, waiting long in all other cases gives one a right to a better thing than one expected at the beginning, but I doubt one should not get anybody to allow such a claim in this.

Sunday, 28th November 1784.

I took a long walk with Lady Jane through the Park and round Kensington Gardens this morning. She has got the better of me at last, and makes me do it almost every day; indeed, I don't dislike it. My aversion is to dawdling backwards and forwards among fine people, or measuring the same ground over and over again in a square. Miss Tryon's party was woefully dull. She had a German harper, whose music was so fine that, to my unpolished ears, it sounded as if he had been tuning the instrument all the time instead of playing upon it. This, with Miss Dayrall's harpsichord and some foreigner's fiddling, made up the concert. Miss Herbert was there, and has been in Charles Street this evening. She desires us all to bewail her ill-luck, for she stayed at home the other day from a presentiment that she should have some agreeable

visitor, and, lo ! her footman prudently denied Col. Cunningham. This is a very good jest, you understand, but she would rather Col. C. had been let in. " Were na' her heart light she wad die." Lady Lucan has an assembly to-morrow, so we shall see the world.

Monday.

Not much of it truly, for my mother was detained at Lady Egremont's, and then in such a hurry to go home that we have not been literally ten minutes in the house. As it happened, I wished to stay longer and see the humours of it. Some of us are glorious figures. Such wings and tails to our caps ! Such shelves of plaited gauze under the chin, it puts one in mind of a Carceau, a Chinese moveable pillory. The Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Duncan had their hair hanging down to their waists, curled in ringlets at the end. They were dressed in redingotes—robes turques, that is to say, with three capes and capells. But a figaro is the right thing, and that I have not seen. I don't think I ever saw new fashions set in with such a vengeance, except in the year when feathers and high heads first began, and yours scandalised Lady Betty [Mac-kenzie]. Miss Herbert and Col. Cunningham were there, but at different card tables. I told her I hoped she would meet with him, and be as lucky in her love affairs as the proverb promised her, for she seemed to be losing all the money she had in the world.

*To Lady Carlou**Thursday, March 1785.*

My mother slept well, and is so much better to-day she talks of going out at night, as she has a party at the Duchess of Beaufort's. Lady Robert Bertie has just sent a card for a ball, to which I shall go, and carry the Gunnings, and I intend to dance for exercise, to carry off the remains of my cold. I can have no other temptations amongst the misses and masters there. I am very sorry to tell you Count Brühl is gone abroad with his son, meaning to stay the summer, and [Lady] Egremont has determined to leave town now immediately, which is a sad loss to my mother—not, indeed, just at present, for there are parties enough, but if we stay late in London, or, as we did last year, hardly go out of it, it will be terribly melancholy for her. For my part, though I have taken more exercise than usual this year, I do find the spending so many months here wears my spirits whether I will or not, so much that I could almost marry a farmer to change my way of life, and be secure of breathing fresh air. But “*Les choses les plus souhaitées n'arrivent point, ou si elles arrivent, ce n'est ni dans le temps, ni dans les circonstances, où elles auroient fait un extrême plaisir.*”¹ So one must be patient. I often think we may apply that maxim to poor Lady Jane. I believe when she first married she had

¹ *Les Caractères de la Bruyère—Du cœur*, p. 62.

enough ambition and love of grandeur to have been highly pleased with the great situation and flattering reputation he may enjoy at present, but it has not come till a long course of misfortunes and disappointments have made her totally indifferent to the triumph, and only attentive to the unpleasant circumstances attending it. She is gone out of town for two days to dine at Mr. Macartney's, sleep at the lodge, etc. etc.

Friday.

I carried the Gunnings to the ball, and left them there, for I came away after supper. Miss Gunning, who was tired and dismal, would fain have done the same, but I roared out at the proposal, and told her she was a cross old maid. Only think of her wanting to carry off poor Bell from the best half of her amusement. It is the only point in which I don't feel myself a thorough old maid. I cannot wish to hinder people younger and gayer than myself from being as happy as their pleasures will make them, and I think there is some merit in this, because I suppose nobody ever knew so little what pleasure was as I did, when I was young. We had a very good set of women dancers. But Lord Winchelsea (who looked like the father of the company) and Mr. Chetwynd excepted, not a man, I verily think, more than twenty years old, and a great many much younger, all boys from Oxford. The two Staffords were the only ones I knew by sight. They showed me Lord Paget, who is a very handsome youth indeed. Lord Winchelsea and Miss

Vernon will make a match, I fancy. He danced with her, and seemed very attentive, and she well pleased. He looks like a sensible, worthy, pleasant man ; there is something about him very much resembling his cousin, the Duke of Roxburgh, though not so genteel. I danced seven dances for exercise, as I told you I would, with Mr. Chetwynd, E. Stafford, and the Lord knows who besides, for I hardly asked their names, and it really did me good, but I have not the strength and spirits of other people, for I was extremely tired, that even if I had meant to stay, I could not have got through another dance for the world, and I am a languid, miserable animal to-day. My mother is quite recovered.

To Lady Carlow

LONDON, May 1785.

It has gone very ill with me, for I was so miserable [body] and mind yesterday, I could hardly hold up my head. I did nothing but reproach myself for being such an old fool as to dance till five o'clock in the morning without any inducement in the world, as I am past having pleasure in hopping about, and as none of my partners could give me any with their conversation, except indeed William Townshend, with whom I wanted to get acquainted; he seems sensible and good-natured, but I don't think him yet a formed man, which he ought to be to battle with old Greenwich, and I doubt she

will keep him under her feet as she used to do. In short, he has not conquered the disadvantage of his education, or got the manners of the world, and he seems conscious that he has not, but otherwise he is certainly a pretty young man. He talked to me with great concern (and appearance of affection) of his sister Mrs. Wilson, about whom I could give him no comfort. To return to the ball, it was a very good one for actual dancing, men (such as they were) being to be had in great abundance. They were almost all officers, and the company in general consisted chiefly of our country people, so you may suppose it was not the genteelest set in London ; amongst others who should accost me but our cousin Campbell, Lord Stonefield's son, whom I saw in Scotland. I had utterly forgot him, which put me terribly out of countenance. I danced two dances with him, and told him it was against my rule to dance more, but I never could stir without finding him at my elbow the rest of the night. He would sit by me at supper, and threw a plate of soup over my gown, and I was heartily sick of being so be-cousined, but my other partners were much of the same kind : Lord Breadalbane, out of whom there is no getting a word ; and odious Colonel Colquhoun, whom you must have seen in all public places ; and little Mr. Chetwynd, who indeed was much the best and most civilised of the collection. He is a very good partner, and I believe much prized by the young ladies at all balls, at least I have seen Bell Gunning pay him a great deal of

court the night before Almack's. Amongst the ladies, the beauties were Mrs. Campbell's two lovely cousins the Miss Lindsays, Miss Cheap, a Miss Bentinck, who is new this year, Miss Price, Miss Anne Dundas, etc. Her Grace of Gordon bounced away according to custom, and Lady Augusta Murray, who is grown a great deal too flaunting. I supped with Mrs. and Miss Pitt. We had Mr. Lennox, Lord Strathaven, Lord Morton, Mr. Aston Harvey, Mr. Fitzroy, and a few more *comme il faut*s, but they disdained dancing above a dance or two. The best amusement I had was seeing Lord Strathaven and Miss Anstruther, Mr. Montagu and Miss Ramsay, dance a reel, which they did in such perfection that it was fully equal to the *Seguidilla*¹ at the Opera-House. The Dutchess of Gordon had insisted upon General — dancing with her himself. He is a grave, well-looking man between forty and fifty, very large and rather fat, with a military stiffness and respectable air about him, which makes him not the most likely person in the world to lead up a ball. At the same time he danced the steps extremely well, and in the true Highland manner, as if it had been over his broadsword, so that one could hardly help smiling, especially since Lord Galloway was the other man. I forget the woman. I begged of Mr. Dundas to dance the next reel

¹ A Spanish dance for two dancers, in which the lady has castanets, which accompany a song of a peculiar metre, the refrain of which is joined in by the audience clapping their hands.

with her Grace, but he pleaded his tye-wig, which he said he had put on to secure himself. He was in the right, for if it had come into her head she would have made him dance, and Lord Loughborough too. Things have gone ill with her this winter. She has quarrelled with the Prince of Wales, and after trying everything to make it up again, there is but *paix forcée* between them. She looks as fierce as a dragon, and contents herself with spending her breath upon politics, and ringing a daily peal in the ears of her poor husband, with whom, Lord William says, she squabbles more than ever. I yawned out yesterday evening alone with Lady Jane, and to-night was going to the French Ambassador's with the Dutchess and Lady Frances, but they have sent me word that he is sick, and desire I would sup in Grosvenor Square. The Grahams are to be there, I believe. Lady Betty and Mr. Mackenzie have a great bridal dinner for them this week, and have invited me, which I am very sorry for, for there will be three pair, and I shall be the only unmarried woman, so all the jokes will fall upon me.

Monday.

I arrived just in time at the Dutchess's, at the same moment that she and Lady Frances came from the Queen's house, to which they had been unexpectedly sent for. That is a provoking trick of their Majesties', if one durst say so ; the message came at seven o'clock, and put poor Lady Frances at her wits' end, but Mrs. Turner was so good as

to give her back an old white sash she had had in her possession these two years, and so she went. There were only the three pair above mentioned at supper. I think I make an awkward figure in these matrimonial parties ; Lady G[raham] is very shy and silent, and I think, considering Lord Graham has neither of those misfortunes, he does not try enough to bring her forward into the conversation. To say truth, he is as composed and insouciant, by what I saw, as if he had been married these ten years. The French Ambassador was sick indeed, for he had a stroke of the palsy yesterday at the drawing-room, and yet all the town went to his house last night, and played at faro, etc., as if he had not been dying in the next room. We are curious people.

Tuesday.

I spent the evening yesterday between poor Mrs. Woodhouse, who is a good deal better, and Mrs. Legge, where I found two *tight* card-tables, and had nothing to do but to fall asleep by the side of them.

Wednesday.

Lady Camelford sent to me to come to meet Lady Frances last night. I went first to the Dutchess's, where I found Lord and Lady Courtoun, the Duke of Montagu, and all the boys and girls, which made a great party. Lord Herbert came in too, and Lady Pembroke ; I include Lord Stopford and his brother amongst the boys, for I think they are just as much so as they were five years ago, and neither seem to

be considered, nor to consider themselves as company for the grown-up people, which I wonder at much in a young man who has been abroad.

The dinner was not so bad as I expected, except in point of being teased about eating. The company were the Dutchess,—the Duke is not well enough,—Lord and Lady Graham, Mr. Douglas and Lady Frances, Mr. Dundas, Lord Murray, and Lord Elphinstone. I went afterwards to Grosvenor Square, where were the Duke of Montagu, Lord Courtoun and Stopford, and a Major Scott, their relation. Then came in Mr. Dundas, then Lady Brudenell late from a party, Lady Frances, and later still, Mr. Douglas. I forget to name Fish Craufurd, who has been confined with the gout these six weeks, and looks very ill indeed. The Douglasses and Mr. Dundas only stayed supper.

Pray do you want preferment? the bonny Dundas, as Lady Jane calls him, is so much inclined to be tender to a friend of yours, that really it is worth your while to pay her court, insignificant as you may think her. He made a bold push towards visiting me in a morning to-day at dinner, and taking me by surprise with it, I did not refuse, as I believe I ought to have done, for though the father of those great women, he is so handsome, and so gallant withal, that it is dangerous to look upon him as *un homme sans consequence*. Fye upon Cupid, the nasty little devil has used me always ill, and now if he chose to present me with one of that

set of company, he might have shot to better purpose. What sad stuff I am writing ! Good-night.

Saturday.

I spent yesterday evening *tête à tête* in Charles Street talking of my conquest to Lady Jane, who is mightily delighted and diverted with it. She bids me to take care of her interests ; she longs to see him flirting, for they have never met but as the Minister of State and the great Lady, and stood mutually in the greatest awe of one another. What entertains me is the gentleman's shyness, for though he plainly meant I should understand he admired me, and looked and looked again, he contrived it so cleverly that nobody else perceived anything of it. Ten to one it was all for his diversion to laugh at me, but as I can laugh at him in return, no matter ; I wish I had never thought of any other kind of flirtation. I am very much disappointed, and find I must end this letter without having heard a word from you. It is now almost a fortnight.

God bless you, my dear sister, and the children. I hope this will find you all well, tho' I fear very cold and uncomfortable. Lady Mary drags me to Texier's to-night.

To Lady Portarlington

13th March 1787.

I take a large sheet of paper, that I may seem to give your letter a proportionable answer, although I am much afraid I shall not muster up matter

enough to fill it. I heartily wish it were in your power to follow Mr. J.'s advice throughout, but the more you take of it the better. There are places enough in England where one can live both cheaply and pleasantly. The country would certainly be preferable to both because of the extreme gaming and the tribes of Irish. I can't help hoping that you would really be comfortable in such a retreat. It seems more agreeable to my imagination than any scheme you have formed this great while. As for the two people [Lord and Lady Macartney] he talked about to you, they have really lived in a more comfortable style than I have ever known them do—always supping at home for one thing. He is very fond of his fine house and his great room, partly for its convenience and partly for grandeur, and that makes him fonder of home than he used to be. Then we are more at our ease by many degrees with all his friends and companions, and know better how to manage them. In short, I verily believe he intends doing everything that is right, and there is but one thing he wants—feeling. However, we are not sensible of that failure, or do not own it to ourselves, so it's mighty well. For farther views in the ways of ambition, I suppose he has them, and he may very reasonably and laudably, for one cannot expect a man of very great abilities for business and very high reputation to be content to sit still in his great chair at scarce fifty years old. I wish he were Secretary of State with all my heart, but I don't

know whether I do wish him a good sinecure, or a place at Court, for an increase of income and nothing to do would be likely only to make him extravagant. I hardly imagine there is any probability of his getting anything good enough for his acceptance at present, but there is no immediate hurry. My mother went out last night for the first time. We have had a great many circles at home of different people, and I have begun to mix with the world again. I was at the French Ambassador's on Sunday, where I had a little flirtation with the dear Baron, who has not carried me off yet, by the way, as you were afraid that he would, though he has been in town some time. London is mighty different from Bath, where you sit quietly in a place, and can converse for two or three hours. He seems lost, and abused our crowded assemblies violently, with good reason indeed. I see he thinks it his duty to retreat whenever an Englishman comes up to you, and unluckily there was one on Sunday determined to push him out. This was my old acquaintance, the brother of the match that J. and you made for me, as you wrote me word a little while ago. You know he used always to show some liking for my conversation, but this winter (I have seen him only twice, though) his manner is so pointedly attentive, that I own to you, considering that he has just got his portion and a very good place, and is therefore in a settled situation, I suspect he means something, for from the minute he spies me, he never quits me till he has handed me into my chair,

and nothing jostles him away. My mother says it is worth while to think of it, the elder has plainly given all his interest to him (for this place is far beyond my friend's pretensions, to be sure) and will not marry, etc., and he is the sort of man to stay in a Court now he once is in it. This puts me in mind of what passed with somebody of your acquaintance a few years ago about Charles Granville, only I confess I am almost thirty, and I believe you were but five or six and twenty, and had ten times a better chance ; so it may be more reasonable to talk to me as at my last prayers. I told her a love-match without any love was but a bad business, and supposing one were to settle upon a very narrow income, it should be in the country, and not at Court. Fifteen or sixteen hundred a year would not do much for two people who must live in London and appear in fine clothes at St. James's twice a week. A warm attachment would make it go down very well, but commend me to marrying prudentially and in sober sadness on the chance of Lord C[larendon]'s never marrying, and Mr. Pitt's always continuing Minister. I came home very melancholy. These *empressements* somehow put me in mind of old days, and I could not help thinking how differently I should have felt on receiving the same attention some years ago from another man, and how unlikely I was ever to be happy, etc., reflections not favourable to matrimony. Indeed, to anybody who has known what it is to like heartily, marrying in cold blood for esteem,

and good opinion, and convenience, and anything else prudent people embellish indifference with, must be an uncomfortable prospect. Adieu, my dear, dear Caroline. God bless you.

LONDON, 23rd March 1787.

I have just received your letter of the 18th, and am highly pleased to find you write in better spirits. I do hope the scheme of settling in England will take place, for though I might not see much more of you, I should feel a great deal more comfortable if you were in Devonshire or Shropshire. I hear Lord Talbot is going to let his place in Wales [Hensol Castle, Glam.] almost upon any terms. He offered it to Lord Macartney—700 acres for £250 a year, and reckoned the house and garden at nothing but the keeping and taxes. If the land could be let again to farmers it would be wonderfully cheap, as coals and provisions are so plentiful in that country; but there is no neighbourhood. Tongue Castle in Shropshire is still to be let; in short, at a distance from London you might have many.

I have got a great cold once again, and have worn out all my spirits at nasty assemblies, never at home till past 12 o'clock, which is as bad to me as your three, as I have lived so retired for most of the winter. Lady Emily [Macleod] is in town for a fortnight at Mrs. Herbert's house. Mrs. H. has removed to her apartments at St. James's in order to lend it them, which is the best natured thing that

ever was done. I went to the opera for the first time this year on Tuesday, in compliment to Lady Emily. They have one entirely of Handel's music, which I liked extremely, but it made me as melancholy as if it had been a deep tragedy. I shall make Lady Macartney go with us to introduce her at the French Ambassador's on Sunday, and I shall carry her to my Chère Amie Mad. de Reventlow's assembly on Monday. Lady M. had a large party last night, and Lady Sefton a great assembly, and Mrs. Herbert and Lady Emily were going racketting to Almack's afterwards. I begged to be excused from that. I think Lord Herbert's match with Elizabeth Beauclerk, his pretty little cousin, broke out the day after I wrote you last ; we have all suspected it for some time. Lady Pembroke is the happiest creature I ever saw in my life, and there must be some wonderful revolution in the mind of her lord, for he has consented without making one objection, and written the kindest letters imaginable to them. It is a prodigious match for her, and the poor little girl seems heartily in love, but I think Lord H. has rather grown attached to her by degrees, from the habit of living with her, for I do not take him to be a passionate character. Our friend was not trusted with the secret, and therefore I think not so well used as she might have been. She whispers to me it is a bad breed, and Lady Diana will govern them all, but she puts the best face upon it, and says she likes it as well as they do. There is another match

declared, but you do not know the people—Miss Willoughby, Lord Middleton's daughter, and Mr. Saville, whom you may remember as Mr. Lumley. He has been languishing for her a great while, but her friends would not consent ; she is very beautiful. By the bye, I believe I mentioned to you certain surmises of mine about the intentions of an old acquaintance. I shall not look silly when I say I begin to think I have promised too soon, because you know I am not apt to err in that way. But I do hope I have mistaken, or else he has thought better of it, for I have never met him since Sunday s'ennight, though I am going about so much more than usual, and he made bitter complaints of so seldom seeing me, and catechised and worried me to know where I was to be. I am well pleased, for the conquest was no vanity, and I should be sorry to mortify an old friend. I have been so unlucky as never to meet the enchanter either, whose company, with your good leave, would have made assemblies a little pleasanter, tho', to confess my inconstancy, I find I don't like him half as well in London as I did at Bath.

This is a very short, stupid letter, but my stupid, stuffed head must be my excuse. I must go to the oratorio in spite of it, because the Queen has given me tickets, and I am told it is a very dull one. I was at the Allegro last Friday, and liked that very much. God bless you ! I can't write any more, I am so heavy and crying. I am nursing as much as I can because I want to racket with Lady Emily.

LONDON, 6th April 1787.

I begin two or three days before my time, in hopes of sending you rather a longer letter, as I have the account of a fine ball to give, which is a more enlivening subject than my scrawls generally contain. It was last night at your old acquaintance Lady Hopetown's, in her old house in Albemarle Street (they have bought Lady Emily's), and there assembled the whole town. A thousand pretty dresses on pretty women made it an agreeable spectacle, and though extremely crowded, the house did *hold* us ! For my part, I secured a seat in a quiet corner, and there posted myself until supper time, having no mind, and indeed no temptation, to be anything but a spectator. There was a sad *contretemps*, which I am afraid spoiled everything to the givers of the *fête*. The Prince had named the day himself, his friends had promised that he should dance with Lady Anne Hope in proper form and behave himself mighty well. But lo ! at twelve o'clock in *reeled* his R.H., pale as ashes, with glazed eyes set in his head, and, in short, almost stupified. The Dutchess of Cumberland made him sit down by her, and kept him tolerably peaceable till they went down to supper ; but then he talked himself into spirits, set all in motion again with the addition of a bottle and a half of champagne, and when *we* went to supper (for all could not sup at a time) he was most gloriously drunk and riotous indeed. He posted him-

self in the doorway, to the terror of everybody that went by, flung his arms round the Dutchess of Ancaster's neck and kissed her with a great *smack*, threatened to pull Lord Galloway's wig off and knock out his false teeth, and played all the pranks of a drunken man upon the stage, till some of his companions called for his carriage, and almost forced him away. He was so far gone that I dare say he does not remember anything that passed, this morning. To be sure, this was a little hard upon Lord and Lady Hopetown. They have presented their second daughter, tho' the poor girl is not above fourteen, because Lady H. reckons her a beauty. She has a fine figure, but a pale, ugly face, in my mind. Lady H. herself looked very young and handsome last night. Eliza Beauclerk and Lord Herbert were there; neither of them danced, and they take no notice of one another in public—a proof, in my humble opinion, that he is not *in love*. People may say what they will about being stared at now, but when a man's mind is taken up with one object, he forgets that there is anybody else in the room. I am sure I have seen Mr. North make a whole row get up in order to get at Mrs. North, and care no more than if they had all been blind and dumb. And I remember many years ago, when Charles used to be so ashamed of what he called *dangling*, as little as I understand of love, it struck me that he did not like *her* so well as she did him. But true lovers are scarce things. The remaining Miss Dundas is

now going to be married to her cousin-german, the President's eldest son, Solicitor-General for Scotland. It seems a very comfortable match, and what she might have had if her father had not been so great a man. But it is a very good one too, and one can't but observe that the *bonnie* gentleman's luck *does not desert him*. To get off both his daughters in a twelvemonth, both well and one greatly! I am glad of this, for she seems a very quiet good girl, and has no airs. Mrs. Drummond is improved—much grown and very pretty.

I went to the French Ambassador's on Sunday with Lady Emily, and pressed Lady Macartney into the service to introduce her. She was very well entertained with the scene. Mr. V[illiers] was there, and as soon as he spied me, came up in a manner so marked that I found I might take my word again as to what I wrote you last post, for both my companions saw it in the same light. I therefore sought to avoid any particular conversation or serious one, assumed a good deal more gaiety than usual, and addressed myself to this and that person as it happened. He was very thoughtful, and looked at me very earnestly once or twice, as much as to say, What do you mean? I rather think he understood me. It is not an easy thing to know how to behave in such a case; one can always avoid a man or affront him, but I don't wish to do either, because I have long been on familiar terms with him, and have no right to give myself airs of contempt; so there is no other way

but to be rather more easy than usual. If he does not take this hint, I shall not avoid an explanation, disagreeable as it is, for I think it will be the fairest and kindest thing I can do to him to let him come to it. I should feel a great deal for him if I thought him really in love, but I can't say he really looks like it. I think he will comfort himself elsewhere in half a year's time. I had a conversation upstairs upon this subject, in which it was hinted, though very distantly and gently, how little chance I had of other offers, and how unpleasant the situation of a poor old maid, etc. This set me athinking upon many very disagreeable things, which I have for some time endeavoured not to think about, and I know not why the thought of the *past* also recurred to me so strongly, that I seemed to live over again a winter in which you had many melancholy letters from me. In short, I was in terribly low spirits for two or three days, and I am not very much disposed to mirth at present. Racketting and raking disagree with me. I have two balls to go to on Friday. I wish I could divide them to any two poor girls that would give their ears for them ; send Mary Stuart as my proxy, for example. They were not so plentiful in former days when I liked them, and, what was worse, I seldom had it in my power to dance when at them ; now I almost always have. This reverses the proverb, " If you will not when you may," etc. Mr. V[illiers] was not at Lady Hopetown's, where he told me he should meet me, and after a long examination as to

my engagements, he said it was the only place he had a chance of seeing me at. The House of Commons sat late, but, however, several members came in who had paired off, and therefore I am disposed to think he stayed away on purpose, after reflecting on my behaviour. If so, we shall probably not see each other for three weeks, as Easter approaches, and when we do, it may be on our old terms of good-will and acquaintanceship, and I shall like this much better than an explanation.

Saturday.

Well ! I was wrong in my supposition of not seeing him, but right in the rest, and I assure you I feel quite a load off my mind. First and foremost, there is no occasion for anxiety about him, for the gentleman is as far from being in love as I can wish. My best ball was at Lady Middleton's, to which I went about seven o'clock. I was asked to dance directly, and while I was standing up in he came. He bowed to me, looking extremely foolish, and when I had done dancing, just came up and spoke to me, with such an awkwardness, meaning to be *cold* and yet to be easy, as I never saw. He did not go down to supper with me, but affected to talk to other women, etc. etc. This waked a cruel reflection in my mind. I could not but be struck with the exact resemblance between his behaviour and what I once saw before, when wishing to hide my feelings made me, I am afraid, act much the same part I have done now, from having none to hide.

Good God! is it possible that I had happiness within my reach and let it slip for want of knowing the world and myself? But you will scold me for useless repining. To proceed, I danced again after supper, and by the same foolish averted look I rather supposed he did not design to have anything to do with me. But after I sat down he came by degrees *edging on*, till he sat down too. I received him with such perfect cordiality and good-humour, he could not keep his embarrassment. This makes me say there is no love in the case, for if there were he would have been more hurt than ever. And so we fell into a great deal of discourse, just as we used always to do, but not at all like the last times we met. We talked of love and matrimony amongst other things. I took care to laugh and joke upon those subjects, and he fell into it, and so all is well. He sees I don't think seriously of him, but now he is in hopes that I have not seen that he has thought of me. His pride is healed, and we remain the best friends in the world. The conversation was a little of the longest, to be sure, for I believe it lasted an hour and a half, and I did not get away till past five; and to-day, when I could wish to be quiet, the Queen has sent for me. I am quite happy to have this foolish affair at an end. I must own I think him a man of more principle and more feeling than is commonly to be met with, but he is not agreeable; and then I detest his mother, and then there are all the Lady Jerseys and Salisburys and Essexes, as I told you about his brother, and

to make so bad a match as we should be to each other (though I own I am a worse for him than he for me, for I have no reason to fancy I could have a better, and he may, I daresay, any day in the week), to make such a match without love on either side, and only very cold good opinion on mine, would be silly enough. Don't you agree with me? Mrs. H. says a woman starves and is forgot in her garret, but two people of fashion never starve together. But poor and *triste* as my prospects are, my spirit revolts at the thought of marrying upon such considerations.

To Lady Portarlington

BATH, 6th May 1787.

I have been in daily and hourly expectation of a letter from you ever since I came here, and cannot imagine the reason why none of us have heard from you, for I find Lady Macartney has not any more than I. You may think me a little remiss myself, but indeed it has been chiefly because I have had hardly anything to say. This place is miserable in point of company. I went to one ball with Lady de Vesci, and there were literally not four people in the room I knew by name or sight. Lord Morton is here, and dances away to the great admiration of all the good people. He is just in his right element, only it is a pity he can't be Master of the Ceremonies, which everybody has thought him made for this great while. My best comfort is that I have

found out a very pretty walk in the fields, where I go and air myself every morning, in hopes of recruiting and growing fat. My mother begins to find great benefit from the waters, and she has every now and then a tolerable party. We go sometimes to sit with Lord Mansfield and the Miss Murrays in an evening. He is terribly broken and feeble, so much so that I was quite shocked the first time I saw him ; but he does not seem the least failed in point of understanding, for once he exerted himself to talk, and was as entertaining and lively as ever. Their Graces of Chandos were there that night, and it was a perfect comedy, for the Dutchess admired and coaxed him, and blundered and mistook his meaning, till she put him quite out, and he did not know what to say to her. She is the finest slip slop in high life I ever beheld. My Mrs. Mary would make just such a Dutchess, but withal she is wonderfully serious and important, and that makes the cream of it. Your friend Lady de Vesci goes to London for a month to-day, and then talks of returning to Ireland. There is a friend of hers, Mrs. Brownlow, here, with two pretty daughters, and they are going with her to London. She introduced this lady to me, who told me she had seen you very lately, and talked as if she knew you very well, tho' I do not remember the name occurring often in your letters. Lady de Vesci is easier with me than I could expect, considering her shyness ; they are going to send their eldest son abroad for a year or two.

We hear of nothing but the Prince of Wales, but as we get no other account in our letters but what is to be seen in the newspapers, I will not repeat anything here. Lady Macartney writes us a long story from Lady Lonsdale's authority, *who knows it all* (but I confess I do not value her knowledge three farthings), though she has bustled and worked till she has made up a mighty friendship with the Dutchess of C[umberland], and thinks herself a very consequential person; I presume the Dutchess gives her her intelligence, but it is not a bit the more likely to be true for that, for in these cases people tell the tale they wish to be believed. This, then, is a flaming opposition account. The Prince was with extreme difficulty prevailed upon to see Mr. Pitt and the King, and his Majesty very humbly consented to everything the Prince pleased, which is so contrary to all probability that I wonder even Lady Lonsdale can swallow it. I quite rejoice that I am out of the actual hearing of the story, for I suppose her tongue is at this moment going faster than twenty mills. In the meantime, however, the Prince's friends have taken the trouble very fairly to declare Mrs. Fitzherbert *something* in the House of Commons. I do think that poor woman has been cruelly used, on the whole, and I pity her, for she seems modest, unaffected, and unpretending, but not very wise, as her conduct has shown.

I am ashamed of sending you so dull a letter, but I live in hopes that I shall soon hear you have

settled everything for coming over, and then letters do not signify. My heart beats when I think of seeing you in two or three weeks, but pray do write to some of us in the meantime. Everybody is going to be married in town—Lady Augusta Murray, they say, to young Mr.——. And your little friend, Miss Bennet, already to a young gentleman from Durham, Sir Edward Swinburne—a very good match.

I saw Sir John Stepney here one day, and he told me they liked both the match and the man, but Mr. Bennet was very miserable at the thought of parting with his daughter. They report also two of the Lady Bathursts to Lord Grimston and young Mr. Whitbread, the great rich brewer's son, but these want confirmation. It is a great year for matches. There is one that goes on very slowly, but I think will come to something one day or other—Lord Winchelsea and the eldest Miss Vernon. He certainly has a little liking for her in a quiet way, but there is a married woman in the case at present. Adieu, and God bless you! We leave this place on Friday, go for two days to Mrs. D[elany] at Windsor, and to London on Monday. Poor Lord Graham has lost his little child.

To Lady Portarlington

LONDON, 30th March 1789.

DEAREST CAROLINE,—I have been leading so racketting a life for more than a fortnight that writing has really been a thing out of the question

with me—one day up till four in the morning, and the next too dead to stir or think. I am not sorry to give in to all this dissipation, as, awkward as I feel it for a woman of my age to be dancing about with boys a dozen years younger, it drives away thought and vexation, and is something like drinking three bottles is to a man. I am grieved to hear from Lady Macartney that you wrote uneasily, and were apprehensive politics would make a breach between you and your friend Lady ——. For Heaven's sake don't let them, if you can help it. But I am not surprised, if your brains are half as much heated as *ours*.

The King is recovered, and everybody else, I think, gone mad. Oh, what a winter have we passed! But not more than I expected before it began; one is never disappointed that way. The Drawing-room on Thursday was crowded many degrees beyond any Birthday I ever saw, and really made a frightful scene—many people crying and fainting, and going into screaming fits. I was so squeezed and demolished myself, I was very near crying, and trembled so when I was *thrown out* upon the Queen, I did not know what she said to me. Yet I escaped wonderfully well in comparison to most people. My mother had no difficulties at all, and no fatigue. Lady Macartney was in violent hysterics after she came home, Lady Mary Montagu fainted away then, so did Lady Sydney, Lady Elizabeth Yorke, Mrs. Adair, Miss Chaplin, and I know not how many more. There is to be a

great *fête* at Windsor on the 3rd April, a concert and supper at which everybody is to appear in a uniform, the men in the King's Hunt, which you have often seen, and the ladies in deep blue, trimmed with scarlet and gold, the same colours. No unmarried women are asked but Lady Mary Howe. Loyalty is a most expensive virtue at present. This dress, which by the Queen's directions is to be from Mrs. Beauvais only, comes to thirty pounds; the uniform for the White's ball to about three or four and twenty, if you have it from a milliner (Richards makes mine, so I shall come off for half that sum); the price of the medal about their necks is five guineas; add the expense of the Court dress for last Thursday (which was made a Birthday), and you will see that a good subject cannot be dressed for these three days under a hundred pounds. *Tout ceci sent terriblement la femmelette; qui après toutes les scènes affreuses et les affaires sérieuses se mette à inventer des modes et des habits de fureur. Bon dieu! souvenez vous que je vous aie toujours dit qu'on soit un esprit médiocre.* The White's uniform is a white sattin body and petticoat, with a white and gold belt, and white and gold bands round the arm, half sleeves of *crêpe* plaited, and a *crêpe* festoon trimmed with *blonde*, and tied up with two gold tassels on the shoulders. The train consists of five breadths of *crêpe*, bound with white sattin ribband, not joined, but one put over the other to look as if there were two stripes of white sattin at the end of each

breadth. It meets before, and is tied back on each side like a robe, with gold cord and tassels. There is a *crêpe* flounce round the petticoat. The cap is plain *crêpe* with a *bandeau* of white sattin, and "God save the King" upon it in gold spangles, and four very high feathers on the other side; value six guineas. For that I was forced to buy of one of the three milliners whom their Graces of Rutland, Gordon, and Chatham have appointed to make the uniform; and this cap everybody who had it wore at Court. There is another without feathers for the *chaperons*, and they have white night-gowns tied back with gold tassels. My mother says she will pay it for me, but I grudge flinging away so much of her money. Almost everybody at Court had some motto or other in their cap. "*God save the King.*" "*Long life to the King.*" "*Vive le Roi, Dieu nous l'a rendu.*" The Queen had a *bandeau* of "*God save the King*" in diamonds, the Princesses the uniform cap with gold spangles, but two or three ladies had stuck up a huge print on sattin as big as one's two hands, in a frame, Britannia kneeling to return thanks, which was a *new touch*, indeed. I am sure the old expression of putting one's shoes upon one's head is grown quite flat, people put there so many stranger things than their shoes. Everybody was very fine when they went into the Drawing-room, and like customers to Rag Fair when they went out. Some lost their caps, some their trimmings, some trains, some necklaces, some handkerchiefs; the men

their bags and swords. My mother presented Mrs. Pierrepont and Mary. You see I tell you all the tittle-tattle I can think of, in hopes it may be some amusement.

God bless you, my dear, a thousand thousand times !

To Lady Portarlington

LONDON, 30th April 1789.

I am quite ashamed when I think how long it is since I wrote last to you. Lady Macartney professes always to write from London, so I hope she did last week, and then you would know that we were all well ; my father considerably better, and only taken up with the important business of preparing for the Windsor ball, which in good earnest was a great fuss. I am glad it is over, for I was much afraid my mother would have suffered by it ; but, however, she was so much pleased, and in such spirits, she is rather the better than worse. I am the tired person. It really was the finest sight I ever saw, and answered one's idea of Royal magnificence. The vast size of the room, all so well lighted up, and the number of persons dressed alike, had a splendour not to be easily described. You have seen men in the King's uniform, so I need not describe that. The ladies were in the same colours of blue and scarlet and white. The dancers had a Garter blue body trimmed with a scarlet and gold edge, the stomacher white, laced with gold cord, the sleeves white with a *crêpe*

festoon on the shoulders, tied up with gold tassels, a scarlet and gold band round the arm. The petticoat was white *crêpe* with a flounce trimmed at top and bottom with a white and gold fringe, and the same edge of scarlet and gold. There was also a sort of train tied up behind, of *crêpe* with the same ornaments. The chaperons wore a blue nightgown, trimmed with a very broad white and gold fringe, tied up in a festoon on one side like a robe, with thick gold cord and vast great tassels, a white petticoat and an apron under the gown, the same as the dancers' petticoats; the gown made with four straps before, edged with scarlet and gold, and a girdle of the same all fastened with diamond (true or false) buckles. Altogether it had a very magnificent appearance, and the dancers' dresses were very pretty, except that the festoon on shoulders was unbecoming to those who were not very slender. I will try to recollect the names of the dancers if I can. There were about five or six and thirty couples, which, I promise you, made it no small fatigue, as one was forced to go through the whole, and not sit down at the end, and the good old oak floor had no more spring than if it had been marble. First there were the six Princesses and Princess Sophia of Gloucester, then Lady Caroline Spencer, Lady Mary Bertie, Lady Charlotte Gordon, two Lady Montagus, two Lady Levisons, Lady Sutherland, Westmoreland, Talbot, Parker, two Lady Waldegraves, two Finches, two Bellasyses, two Miss Thynnes, two Miss Townshends, Miss

Brudenell, Lady Mary Parker, Lady Anne Wellesley, Lady Mary Howe, Lady Charlotte Villiers, two Lady Hopes, Lady Frances Bruce, and myself. The men were many more in number than the women, and I shall not be able to recollect them all. The Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of Gordon, Lords Worcester, Graham, Wycombe, Gower, Westmoreland, Salisbury, Morton, Elgin, Winchelsea, Cathcart, Belgrave, Paget, Arden, Hopetoun, Fauconberg, Galloway (for these old gentlemen all danced—Lord Hopetoun with me for my sins), the Duke of Gordon, Lord Parker, Stafford, Clarendon, Delawarr, and two Mr. Villiers, two Phipps, and two Elliots, two Lascelles, two Staffords, Lord Mornington, and Mr. Poole, Mr. Edgecombe, Ryder, Townshend, Manners, Yorke, Lord Bayham, Mr. Grosvenor, Mr. Brudenell, Col. Egerton, Mr. Finch, and Lord and Lady Poulet, Falmouth, Lovaine, Lady Charlotte and Mr. Curzon (by the way, she has grown so very *great a lady*, I hardly find any likeness of my old friend, Miss Howe, in her), and some others, beside the Court, Ministry, mothers of the dancers, etc. They said a hundred and fifty sat down to supper in St. George's Hall, and that was indeed the very finest sight I ever beheld. The Royal Family supped altogether upon the raised platform, attended by the pages in a uniform exactly like that of the company, only pale grey instead of blue. You may imagine what a show they made, looking down on the rest, who were ranged in two long tables reaching from one

end to the other, superbly lighted with innumerable silver branches ; the gallery above filled with the King's band of music, dressed in scarlet and gold. In short, I do not think any country could show a more magnificent spectacle. The King looked better than I expected to see him—rather thin and older than he was, but, on the whole, very well. Now I must conclude, for Lady Mary will never forgive me if I don't send her a line to-day. I will give you the rest of my story soon. Adieu.

To Lady Portarlington

LONDON, 5th June 1789.

DEAREST SISTER,— . . . I ought to give you an account of all our *fêtes*, but really, though I have been at them, one has put another out of my head, and I retain no clear idea of any. Certainly, I never saw any such entertainments, nor, I believe, did you. It is unlucky to be past the age of delighting in fine shows. The Spanish Ambassador's I think surpassed all that went before it in magnificence, and was pleasant, but poor Lady Macartney, who went with me, was fretting about a recent vexation, and she took away all the tendency to gaiety I had. There was a new invention of a lottery, a ticket being given to every lady as she came in ; then, when you pleased, you went to draw a number and took your prize (there were no blanks), which was generally a purse, a little pocket-book, a smelling-bottle, a trumpery fan, etc. A

Miss Sturt won the lot 205—a fine watch set with diamonds—and a few other people handsome trinkets. Some say the Queen won the King of Spain's picture adorned with jewels. I don't know whether this is true, but it was a natural thing to contrive some such *galanterie* for her. We had a hundred little boys in Spanish dresses, standing with gilt wands as guards before the boxes, and I suppose at least as many waiters, in a very fine scarlet and gold uniform. There was a stage built up, on which a set of children danced the *fandango* and *seguidilla*. The supper was the finest and most plentiful I have seen this year, and, in short, I think it bore away the bell. The French Ambassador's had the fault of being crowded and rambling (upstairs and downstairs), and the supper was very bad. Boodle's was uncommonly pretty, from being half out of doors and in a temporary room almost as big as Westminster Hall, the supper in the Rotunda, and the Cotillon dancing in another temporary building—the Temple of Flora. This is a very slight description of such superb sights, but they really have passed on without making any impression on me; and I even think the young people seem glutted with them, and not so delighted as they would be if they had seen but one or two in the winter. I concluded the campaign (most probably) with the Drawing-room yesterday, which was *comme à l'ordinaire*. I went with Lady Ailesbury, who leaves town very soon. So does Mrs. Herbert. Lady Frances is half settled at Petersham.

Mrs. Scott is gone, the Pitts going, and, in short, I shall hardly have an acquaintance left in town very soon. When we move I cannot tell, but I fancy it will be settled at once on a sudden ; my father is better upon the whole.

Mrs. Sturt [Stuart?] gives a masquerade at Hammersmith next week, but I have sent my excuse, not caring to make a fine dress, and it is too riotous a house for a frolic and disguise, if I were in a merry humour, which I can't say I am. I believe Mary will feel very much *désœuvrée* when she returns to Richmond after so much and constant diversion, yet she does not appear to enjoy it as heartily as I should have expected—to be all eye and ear, and charmed with everything ; but when I have gone about with her she has been discontented and fidgetting, and like an older practitioner who had views, and affairs to manage. She is rather too forward from total want of *mauvaise honte*. Mrs. Charles could have taught her better, but she is meek, and quite gives way to her, and Mary holds her very cheap, and all the rest of us too, I think, as old fogies who know nothing of the fashionable world. Her friends seem to hold her cheap in return, and push her about and make her their cat's paw, for, to give her her due, she is honest and artless, and some of them, especially the Mornington family, know very well what they are about. A match is declared between Miss Pitt (Lord Rivers' daughter) and Mr. Fox Lane, and one probably will be declared soon between my

old acquaintance, Mr. Campbell, and Lady Caroline Howard, the first of the young beauties. I think Lady Charlotte Gordon will get Mr. Lennox. The great Mr. Pitt himself seems to labour at it, which he owes her, as he was so cruel when they aimed at him. Adieu, dear, dear Caroline. I have not heard from you this great while, and begin to long for a letter. My love to all the little ones.

To the Duchess of Buccleuch

BATH, 11th December 1792.

MY DEAR DUTCHESS,—I am but a bad correspondent, but, according to old agreement, I will not waste paper with asking pardon. We are now about to quit Bath, where we seem to have been but a very little while, in my opinion, for I am very sorry to go, as it is quite doubtful whether Lady Portarlington will come to London at all, and certain that if she does it can be but for a very little while. By the accounts she receives all is quiet in Ireland, in spite of the pains taken to make it otherwise, and of the frightful stories spread about that country. I hope therefore the disturbances in Scotland are equally exaggerated. I protest I believe many of these reports *about ourselves* come over to us from France. The precautions that have been taken, and the spirit and common sense that appears now to be rising all over the kingdom, will, I hope, ensure peace at home, whatever we have abroad. These political topicks naturally

bring in a relation of ours who has been here this month. Poor Aunt Mary [Lady Mary Coke] is really almost what our forefathers styled *Cousin Betty*—wild and possessed. She has been doing all that was necessary to raise an uproar, had the people been so inclined ; haranguing in the book-sellers' shops, lecturing the tradesmen, examining the walls for treason, threatening the *démocrates* with the Mayor, calling monsters, villains, atrocious wretches, etc., in short, everything that could provoke honest John Bull's surly disposition, and all in a riding-habit of the King's *dressed* uniform ¹ shining with so much gold, I am amazed the boys do not follow her. There is a woman almost ninety-five years of age who advertised lately for charity. I went to see her as a curiosity, and I found the famous Sir Richard Hill ² had been with her before me to enquire into her opinion of faith and good works, or as she called it, her *foundation* in religion. I have offered to lay a wager that Lady Mary (if I can get her to go and give the woman something) will directly enquire her political creed, and examine her about the Aristocrates and Democrates of Queen Anne's time, for I asked her the other day whether a lame sick parson who lodges beneath her was a quiet neighbour, and she whispered me a long history of his having a dangerous curiosity to hear *ça ira* ; in short, Don Quixote was a fool to her. She is much displeased at my

¹ See account *ante* of *fêtes* on King's recovery, p. 97.

² Rev. Rowland Hill's elder brother ; he was famous for his controversial pamphlets.

mother and Lady Caroline Peachey for not going about and scolding the shopkeepers as she does. Sir James and Lady C. [Peachey] are but lately come. They seem pretty well. This place has been extraordinarily full, but I conclude the meeting of Parliament will thin it considerably. Lord and Lady Elphinstone are here—he rather better than when I saw him last. My younger cousins, the daughters, were strangers to me. I think them very reasonable, agreeable women (at least the oldest, whom I have seen most of), and remarkably well behaved.

My brother Charles went at last to Buxton, but did not reap the decided benefit from it that was expected. I trust, however, in the main he is better. I have heard nothing of him now a good while. Perhaps I shall find him in London. She was to go thither ten days ago; she has been very unwell too, which is no wonder. Lady Portarlington is as well and as chearful as ever I saw her. I have improved much lately. I don't think bathing agreed with me thoroughly in the long run, though it seemed useful at first, but riding double has certainly done me a great deal of good, and I believe I am now pretty well rid of all nervous complaints. Adieu, my dear Dutchess. My love to Lady Douglas and all at Dalkeith. My mother and Lady Portarlington desire theirs to you.—Ever yours,
L. S.

To the Duchess of Buccleuch

GLOUCESTER PLACE, 31s. May 1798.

MY DEAR DUTCHESS,—The date of your last reproaches me heavily, but I will waste no paper in apologies. I take this fit time to write, when I have just been at the prettiest entertainment possible in your house. I expected it would feel very strange, and something like melancholy, not to see you, the Duke, etc., but *you might have been there* for aught I knew ; and as I went with Mrs. Weddell, who loves and understands pictures and all the other fine things your rooms are filled with, her delight in examining them took away my attention from the company. It certainly is a sight that strikes one with surprise, after being used to the frippery of common furniture, and so different from anything else in London, that, without having in the least an old-fashioned air, it seems the remains of a better age. I just saw and shook hands with your daughters, and then the crowd eclipsed them. The crowd itself was gay and pretty, and those who have real beauty are wonderfully distinguished by the present dress. I fear one must add those who have real youth, for if you did see the old brown faces in black wigs ! the yellow necks set forth to view ! and the transparent dresses that leave you certain there is no chemise beneath ! the fault of the reigning fashion when carried to its extreme, even for the youngest and

handsomest, is, to say the truth, *indecenty*. Not that it shows so much more than people have done at many other times, but that it both shows and covers, in a certain way, very much answering certain descriptions our precious neighbours the French used to give in their instructive novels. The figures one meets walking in the street with footmen behind them are exactly what Crebillon would have painted lying on a sopha to receive a lover. And in a high wind ! Men's clothes outright would be modesty in comparison. Don't imagine me an old maid growling at the young people, for some of the most remarkable statues in wet drapery are very fully *my* contemporaries at least.

To Lady Portarlington

TYNINGHAME, *Tuesday, 19th November 1799.*

Sir Ralph Abercrombie passed through Haddington yesterday on his way to Edinburgh, and the papers say all the troops are now arrived, so I trust I may congratulate you on your son's being once more safe in England, and hope, as we have now had above a week of still calm weather, he escaped the dreadful storms there were before that, which really made me feel relieved when Lady Macartney wrote me word he was not to embark till the last. The wind quite worried me at Archerfield, as it used to do at Highcliffe, and I was glad enough to come hither on Thursday ; indeed, Lord and Lady Haddington are also more agreeable company, for

tho' a very good and sensible woman, there is a heaviness in Mrs. Nisbet's society that pervades the house, and Mr. Nisbet is a terrible cracker of foolish jokes, altho' so good-humoured at home, one should find no fault with him. I was very glad to find Lady Haddington in perfect good health, with no trace of having had so long and severe an illness excepting sometimes the air of a little weakness of spirits. My Lord is just the same man, and, to be sure, does talk. Good gods! how he does talk! So we have chattered abundantly upon all things past, present, and future. He is so glad to see an old acquaintance from England, he cannot get the words fast enough out of his mouth, that is the question. Both seem highly pleased with their son, Carlow's old friend, and to expect everything that is good from him. He is at Oxford. This place is not much farther from the sea than Mr. Nisbet's, and one sees it from some of the windows, but it is upon a bay, and there is the comfortable shelter of very large woods, and many trees close to the house, which is an old one, originally a monastery, and patched with apartments by its successive owners, so no regularity without or within, up steps and down steps, full of closets, passages, and staircases—a good place for a ghost to haunt. However, vast, thick, solid walls and some very comfortable rooms, an excellent dining-room and a very pleasant drawing-room, and they are comfortable people, abounding in chairs, couches, and tables. He says he is very glad the

outside is so irregular, for, as it cannot be spoiled, he may do what he pleases, and he means to add an apartment for her and a library for himself, which will be all they want for convenience. They have lodging room in abundance. It is crammed with family pictures, which he vows shall stay. He says it was a contrivance of people of no family, who did not like to talk of their relations, to laugh at them as old lumber, and make those who had them send them up to the garret, and all hangs to the present system of levelling. I can't but say there is truth in this. Some of his pictures are good, and as his family is very noble and greatly allied, one sees many faces one has read of both in English and Scotch history, which I always think amusing. We have here a sister of Lady Morton's, Lady Hacket, the same sort of genteel, well-dressed woman (they are Hamiltons, and Duke of Hamilton's near relations), but much more pleasing. Poor woman, her figure is so like our poor dear friend lately lost, in whose disease she seems far gone, and her pallid face puts me in mind of her ; she interests me not a little. She has three daughters, ugly girls, but sensible and tidy, like herself ; they seem reasonable sort of creatures. Lord Haddington says she was once much prettier than Lady Morton. I am sorry to go away from hence, but want to spend some time at Dalkeith, and suppose Lord Dalkeith will be in a hurry to go home as soon as he can get leave of absence. I have promised them, however, a much longer visit

before I leave Scotland, and shall perform it, if nothing happens to hinder me, with willingness, for I feel easy with both. She is a very amiable woman, and I am used to him and his ways, and like his conversation. I daresay this is a most enjoyable place in the summer, full of pretty walks, but the ground is everywhere so wet now, one never stirs without being obliged to change shoes, stockings, and petticoats, tho' the soil is here dry in itself. We are within a walk of the sea, tho' the wind does not roar in one's ears all day as at Archerfield. There are about a thousand acres of wood, mostly open grove, for underwood being of no value, they pasture their woods and keep it down. Our niece¹ was here last year with her friends, the Dundases, and greatly disgusted both Lord and Lady Haddington with her manners. He says he never saw such a *Postilion* as she has grown in his life. He walked with her to a point to show her the view, and quoth she, "It was well judged truly to bring me here, who am just come from the Bay of Naples," and flounced away. This is very insolent as well as ill-bred, for I dare answer for her she made no such remark on any view Mr. Dundas showed her in any part of his possessions; but it happened to an unlucky person, for all Lord Haddington's geese are swans (according to the saying), and he will never forgive it while he lives. He has fussed through mud and mire and into every hole and corner of his odd house. He is very proud of his

¹ Mary, eldest daughter of James Stuart.

kitchen garden, and vies with Mr. Nisbet (both are remarkable fine ones), but the climate at Tynningham being much milder from being sheltered from east winds, they have myrtle and Chinese roses growing in the open ground, and the former were not even killed last winter, tho' only covered with snow.

To Lady Portarlington

BOTHWELL CASTLE,
Wednesday, 30th April 1800.

MY DEAREST CAROLINE,—Last night brought me yours of the 25th, which came uncommonly quick. I feel more obliged to you than I can express for consenting with so much kindness. I am sorry I cannot yet tell you it is done, for instead of sending me the paper I wrote for, Lady Macartney and the Bishop desire me to delay, and the latter's message is that I must not do anything yet, for as the estate is litigated, I may not be actually possessed of the legacy for many years. Perhaps in law I cannot transfer the right till I have the property, tho' I should have supposed I could. I sometimes hope they have some secret reason they do not tell me, some expectation of what would make it unnecessary, for Mrs. William writes that she is in *such good humour* with a person whose actions and behaviour, as far as I have heard, have been calculated to put her and everybody else into bad humour, but I am afraid to flatter myself. I should be sincerely happy it were so, because besides

the greater advantage, I know it would make your mind easier on my account. At any rate, you should not be uneasy, for in truth, tho' I hope I might be capable of making a *sacrifice* for your sake, this is none. My indifference about the increase of income takes away all sort of merit in parting with it. In short, be assured, if *nothing better happens*, you shall receive the interest, when I do (not this twelve-month, I fear), and I will make it over to you as soon as I can. And if your income is increased, I will settle it upon you and your younger children, after my life and that of any man I may marry. One need not consider one's progeny at past two-and-forty, especially when one has not yet seen *Monsieur leur Père*. But for one child, which an old bride does sometimes produce, my own fortune would be a very sufficient provision, supposing I made a true old maid's match with a Captain in the guards of twenty-five, which I confess I don't think myself much *more* likely to do than some of the Sisterhood (of Mrs. Weddell's eleven thousand virgins), whose favourite theme is a Philippick against matrimony, tho' I am resolved I will never declare loudly against it, or put it out of my power, if I live to be fourscore. Rash resolutions are always *tempting the D*—.

Lady Douglas sends her love, and thanks you for your fellow-feeling. She was disposed to be in a great worry, but has come off as cheaply as possible, for the little girl had but one day of fever (and that not worse than any common cold occasions). with

one direct eruption on a corner of her mouth, which she has *a naughty trick of sucking* ; on Saturday she was perfectly well again. I should hardly have been satisfied she had had it, but none of the wise people seem to have the least doubt. Fanny has had much more trouble with her sore arm, which is still sore and discharges. The physician says it often happens with people inoculated over again. The poison not entering the blood, festers the part. But the girl is well otherwise. They both took physick yesterday. Lady Douglas is now in some haste to move, as she means to go with her own horses, and therefore will be long on the road. She talks of setting out next Monday se'nnight, the 12th of May, tho' Lord Douglas does not go so soon. Jane is at Harrogate by this time. I did intend to have gone from hence to see the Elphinstones, but as the time has dawdled on so long, and I find it will be a convenience if I take Miss Murray in my chaise to Edinburgh, I will put that off (not having written to them) till I come back to this part of the country, and after staying a day or two at Dalkeith, proceed to Lord Haddington's, *Tynningham, near Dunbar, N.B.* If you hear nothing to the contrary, you had better direct your next thither.

No, I never heard a word of your writing to the Gen., but you see he has resigned, so perhaps he knew it would come to nothing at the time. You state the gain of the executors higher than Lady Macartney did to me, but all our dear brothers,

Bishop and all, do *dash away* so in talking, it might be one thing on Monday and another on Saturday. Adieu, my beloved sister, with my love to all your children.

P.S.—I beg you to understand that I will have a paper drawn up as soon as they will let me, in case they have *no good reason* ; for if I cannot transfer *that* £5000, I certainly can 5 of my own in the funds.

Pray admire my *wafer seal* ; it is a very pretty machine, a *Galanterie* of Lord Douglas, who continues to be a great *Turner*.

To Lady Portarlington

LOWWOOD INN,
Saturday, 7th June 1800.

It is a great while since I took up my pen, for I have been always tired in an evening and bustling all day. I have received a letter from Lady Macartney of an old date (it had stayed for me here) which gives fresh hopes about your business, but I will not believe it or talk about it till something is done. She says Lady Lonsdale is going on very well. Now I proceed to relate my adventures. I left Newton Don on Monday, went to see their neighbour, the Duke of Roxburgh's magnificent place, with very fine woods, both old and young, and a view that might compare with Richmond Hill. The country about Kelso is very pretty indeed. It is reckoned very English—more small

inclosures, hedges, and green fields than usual in Scotland, dotted with gentlemen's houses. The Tweed and Teviot meet there, and each has a fine bridge (that of the former is now broken down and you pass in a boat, but the remains are perhaps more picturesque). There is the ruin of an old abbey at Kelso, and some walls of Roxburgh Castle remaining opposite to Fleurs (the Duke of Roxburgh's). Every view of this town is charming, but the inside, *fort à l'Ecoissaise*, that is very nasty and filthy. My whole road to Hawick, twenty miles, lay along the banks of the Teviot, and was charming. Mount Teviot, Lord Lothian's (but let to an Admiral Elliott), is a sweet pretty place, and I fancy Minto, to which I saw across the river, must be a fine one. Some noble romantick rocks called Minto Craggs overhang the woods and plantations. The house did not appear. This is near Hawick, where gentlemen's houses swarm, and there are numbers of gardens close to the road. It would be the prettiest of towns from its situation : three picturesque bridges, two rivers, villas all round it, meadows, distant mountains, etc. ; but I need not repeat what I said of Kelso. In England, you know, a farmhouse or cottage is a pleasing object, and you wish "the gentleman's flaring house," as Gray says, away, but in Scotland the two former cannot be seen without disgust ; not that they are ill built—stone walls and slate or tile roofs,—but the nastiness of the doors and the dunghill beside them, and the filthy old witches that come out !

also the girls with their nasty hair streaming, and nothing on their heads or feet. They are, however, an honest people ; you never hear of robberies, murders, etc., so that should make amends for their nastiness. I was forced to stay all day and night at Hawick, not being able to get horses to carry me on to Langholm Lodge ; however, the inn was very decent for a Scotch one. I had a bad travelling companion, a great cold, which however is pretty nearly gone now. Monday was a charming fine day and allowed my chaise to be always open ; Tuesday there was a high cold wind which shut it up, and my head was bad, so I went on without stopping to Penrith ; Wednesday being fine, and I better, I went to view Ulleswater, and slept very comfortably at the ale-house in Patterdale, where I found an excellent dinner and true Cumberland cleanliness. I had a little row on the lake in the evening, and regretted having bespoken horses from Ambleside to fetch me, for it was a place I could have well stayed a week in. Never was anything so beautiful as the scenery. To say the truth, Scotland should come after this, not be taken before it, for it is infinitely more great and sublime, and the first sight of this loses by the comparison ; the shores look tame coming from those bold mountains. This is one great sheet of water like a confined sea, the banks cultivated for the most part, but rocks and mountains bold enough (if I had not seen the other first), and indeed beauty beyond my power to describe. I am getting the

use of my two legs apace and beginning to climb and ramble. The road from Patterdale to Ambleside is over very wild rocky mountains nine miles. They made a mighty piece of work about it to frighten me into taking four horses, but I saw nothing dangerous, tho' I suppose in bad weather it may be nearly impracticable, and there are such long steep ascents that I was not on the whole sorry that I had taken four. I walked three miles up one tremendous hill. On the whole I liked it better than returning to Penrith and going round thirty miles to see nothing. The coming down from Ambleside, a very neat village, near which is a very beautiful waterfall, is like entering fairyland. This is a single house on the very bank of the lake, and charming as long as it will be quiet, but makers of tours are now so frequent, and such vulgar people, who would really rather see a fish-pond than a lake, that all this sweet country is swarmed like a water-drinking place. Will you believe that I found a pair at my Patterdale ale-house who were making a tour in their way from Gretna Green ! They proceeded this way, so I hope they saw a print, among many grub ones that adorn this room, of the blacksmith marrying the Captain and Miss, the post-boy standing by as father with his hat in his hand.

Adieu, my dearest Caroline. Do write to me, and direct Lowwood Inn, Westmoreland, by Kendal. If I go on to Keswick it will follow me. I have not heard from you (indeed could not hear)

this eye ever. I have talked of this lake, but never named it—Windermere.—Yours most affectionately,
L. S.

LOWWOOD, 20th June 1800.

It is so very long since I have seen your hand, my dearest Caroline, I feel quite uncomfortable. Your last letter was dated May 11th. I was in hopes you would have directed to my house, but I sent to them there to forward letters above a fortnight ago, and have had one from thence, so I suppose you have not, though with this uncertain sort of scrambling Cross Post out of any great road one feels always a little afraid of losing them. I have not heard lately from my other sisters, nor our friends at Harrogate, nor anybody. I continue at my post here, daily admiring the country more and more. I am sure people who scamper through it and make a fortnight's tour to all the lakes see not half of it, for I find something quite new every day, with only my two legs to carry me. What should I do if I could use four, *i.e.* ride, which I feel the want of extremely. The weather has suited me exactly, not always warm enough to be pleasant sitting still ; but had it been so I could not have walked as I have done, which is the only conveyance one can have for nothing. I treat myself with a boat however, pretty often. It has been very dry and commonly very clear, with all the fine varying lights and shades one can wish ; in short, I do love a mountainous country—it is congenial to me. I find the days

sensibly longer and the twilight stronger than in the south ; really, it never is positively dark in the cloudiest night. I see to go to bed after I have put out my candle as if the moon shone. I have not been so totally alone as you would suppose—less so, indeed, than I could wish ; before I had been here three days the Bishop of Llandaff (the learned Dr. Watson, famous for his writings) came with great civility to make acquaintance and invite me to dine, etc., at his house. He is an agreeable cheerful sensible old man, his wife an honest good-humoured hearty country lady, and their many daughters natural well-behaved girls ; he has a good estate here, and has built a house about two miles off, pulling down an old one called Calgarth. It is within my walk, or I can go by water, and I like them very well now and then. But there I met a Mrs. Cotton, an old maid, who lives at Bath, and whom I once saw in Kent, a friend of poor Lady Bute's, who therefore seizes on me as lawful prize, and intends to be very intimate and walk with me every day, which is a plague, for being mighty well suited to the poor woman above mentioned, you may suppose she is not at all so to me. I grow so tired of that sort of dull prosing matter-of-fact tittle-tattle, this person's history and that person's affairs, and who bought an estate and who sold it, and their marriages and their children, it quite wears me to a thread, and in the middle of a fine wild scene, which it seems to profane, it provokes me. The good lady is unluckily a famous walker,

but it is for exercise ; she goes on with her grave conversation, and neither looks about her nor lets you do it in peace. She is two miles off, too, at Ambleside, so not in my way. Lady Diana Le Fleming has also poked me out. Their place, Rydall Hall (the finest in the neighbourhood), is three miles and a half from hence ; however, I can go a mile by water. The bloom of her ugliness has gone off. She is a fat woman, no worse-looking than other people. Her daughter, a great girl of sixteen, does not promise to be handsome. You will say she has no right to be either fair or wise. Sir M[ichael], you know, thinks “ the devil is at home,” and there he leaves her without mercy, for she has not been in London these eight years and he seldom is out of it. She used to make all her complaints to Lady Lonsdale, and in half an hour that I saw her she gave me some little hints about the neighbourhood, by which I saw naughty husbands were the thing uppermost in her mind. I hope she will not tell me of Sir M[ichael’s], for she [would] need to be pretty plain in her expressions.

Rydall is a sweet, wild place with noble old oaks, rather *à l’Ecoisaise*, slovenly and rough about the doors. There are two famous cascades which all travellers go to see ; they are very beautiful but this dry season makes the water scanty. It has a fine view of this lake, being just placed at the head of the valley through which the river Rotha runs into it ; but going from hence, from this very gay scene, just on the banks of the water I thought it looked gloomy.

Sunday.

I have just received poor Car's letter of May 26th directed to Dalkeith. Lady Dalkeith has forwarded it, I see by the seal ; nobody being in the house, I suppose the servants tossed it about and did not immediately send it to her, for it is very dirty and looks as old as it is. Pray thank Car for it. I am glad the baubles were pretty and pleased her. I will write to her next. I dined with Lady Dy. yesterday. There were the eternal Mrs. Cotton and a Mr. and Mrs. Freeman, Yorkshire people, who take a house in a sweet valley here for the summer, so I scraped acquaintance with them too. I believe the spirit of Lady Lonsdale has got into me, for I don't care about strangers, but there are too many friends and I have a mind to walk off to Keswick. I walked to Rydall three miles and a half, and back, a very pretty walk that made it four, and I had walked two or three in the morning. "Use legs and have them," says the proverb.

To-day I walked to [Troutbeck] Church in the valley where the Freemans live. He is a clergyman, read prayers (the incumbent being away) very well and preached not amiss. Then they caught me and asked me to their house, and carried me up a hill to a lovely prospect of almost the whole lake with all its islands. They are country gentlefolks, which I always like much better than people who will talk vulgar gossip about one's acquaintance whose names they only know from the newspapers. But this North Country hospitality,

though I respect it, takes up too much of my time. I must own though, I have a national partiality to the north of England; they are such clean substantial good sort of people, so truly the honest English character, and I like the simple hearty custom of their always speaking a kind blunt word to you as they pass, man woman and child, "Good morrow," or "Good e'en," "A fine day," "A cold night," always something or other (so they used to do in my beloved spot in Yorkshire). There is something of ancient manners in it, one human being acknowledging another with benevolence that is much more agreeable to me than their being respectful. Here there are still a good many "statesmen"—that means the same as yeomen in the south—people who have a little land of their own, and farm it themselves, and some of them have been as long in possession of their small estates as would make a proud pedigree for a peer. Their houses, and even the cottages of the poorer class, are most clean and comfortable (or appear so to me, coming out of Scotland) and themselves fresh-coloured and handsome, and yet it is said that we travellers and our servants have spoiled them abominably, and they are no longer the remarkably good innocent happy race they used to be. All this country is now like one great water-drinking place, and they talk of the *season*, and are as dear and imposing as at Buxton, etc. Mrs. Cotton has taken lodgings in the village of Ambleside, and pays thirty shillings a week for such a hole as you never saw, for which

the same people asked six (and they were reckoned dear) two years ago. My cottage at Malvern was three times as big. To me it was more convenient, though perhaps more expensive, to stay in the inn. I am very glad your son's Exchange has been transacted to your satisfaction, and hope the tide is turned and I shall hear much good news soon. Do you know a Lady Clonbrock, or some such name? an Irish lady, a baroness, who was here two or three days with her daughter, a young girl. I never heard the title. She had an open sociable, with her own horses and her maid, just ready to lie in, altogether a bad travelling equipage. They were most quiet lodgers over my head, and I was sorry when they went away to Harrogate. Men make such a noise. However, on the whole I have been lucky, for I have often had the house two or three days together to myself. *The season*, as they call it, is hardly begun yet. Adieu, dearest Caroline. I end this June 24th, and shall enclose it to Lady Macartney. Lady Douglas writes word she leaves Harrogate the 28th, and as she comes with her own horses, will hardly be here before July 1st, but you may direct your next to Dalkeith at any rate.

To Lady Portarlington

BOTHWELL CASTLE [September 1800].

MY DEAREST CAROLINE,—After complaining of your silence I am ashamed to have let your letter of the 15th August remain so long unanswered,

but we have had company for a week, and my head has felt rather addled. Lord and Lady Haddington and their son have been here. The latter inquired with appearance of affection after yours, his old friend and school-fellow, and seemed really anxious to know particulars about him. He is himself a very handsome youth, in figure exactly what his father was twenty years ago, light and active, in face much more resembling his mother, with blue eyes, a fine complexion, and, when not laughing, a thoughtful, serious look ; such also seems to be his character ; though merry and boyish enough, he evidently thinks and has decided opinions of his own. He is said to be a very good scholar, and particularly favoured by the Dean of Christ Church on that account, and one may see he has considerable information. His manners are well-bred and pleasing. Lord Haddington is full of jokes about his marriage, and said seven years hence he should come to me to pick out a wife for him. I advised him never to trouble any old maid with that office, but assured him I had three nieces very much at Lord Binning's service, and thought he could not do better than deal with your shop. He agreed that you were likely to make your daughters just what he wanted for his son. They went from hence to see Lanark and the Falls of the Clyde on their way to a house of Lord Hopetoun's, so I took the opportunity of company, and went so far with them. It is eighteen miles of beautiful road from hence to Lanark, only the river is nearly dry for want of

rain, and the falls so much diminished by the same cause that one could not have seen them to less advantage ; the surrounding scenery must, however, always be sublime. I went on Wednesday and slept there, returning the next day. We have also had for near a fortnight Mr. Lewis, author of the famous *Monk*, an old friend of Charles Douglas's, and by much the greatest puppy I ever beheld off the stage, though with parts to have made a better thing than he is. Between the great and serious attack in the pursuits of literature (which, when you see him, makes you apply that line of Pope, " Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel ") and the rout made with him by Lady Melbourne and other fine people, and the success of the *Castle Spectre*, he is lifted into a sort of consequence he would not have had himself if they had all let him alone, and grave and wise people had passed over his book as a silly novel not worth thinking about. He is a very little creature, effeminate in manners, lisping and affected like a fine lady in a play. Altogether he has been an extreme amusement to me, who am too old to be strait-laced, and resolved to take diversion where I can find it, and not preserve my character and dignity like Lady Charlotte Tufton, therefore enjoy an odd animal without scruple. Lord Haddington's aversion to him increased my entertainment. Little Lewis was afraid of them, and kept in the background as long as they stayed. He had with him an Oxford boy, a son of the East Indian Lushington's, a very soft lad, in the Scotch phrase,

though Lord Binning and Charles Douglas said he was not so silly as he appeared—a good-humoured, inoffensive being. However, he went away in haste to some sick friend in England. Lewis and he were a day at Dalkeith on their way to make a tour of the Highlands at the same time with Lady Belmore, who gave us a fine mob story about the former. “Oh ay,” she said, “that was one of Mr. Pitt’s doings; he read the *Monk*, and was so charmed with it, he sent expressly over to Dublin for Mr. Lewis, who was a known United Irishman, and gave him a great place.” “Very possibly,” says Lady Douglas in a quiet voice, “I know nothing to the contrary, except that Mr. Lewis never had any place, and never was in Ireland in his life.” This worthy leaves us to-morrow. Jane Douglas’s detestation of him and crossness to him are quite a comedy. I am sorry, however, she lets herself get into the way of showing her dislikes so strongly, for men one does not like can hurt one with men one does like, as I have often felt, but I did not believe it when I was told so (you know), and no more will she. But I saw the Haddingtons took the impression of her being sour and cross, though they detested the little beast as much as she could possibly do, and would have been as glad to toss him in a blanket.

Lo and behold! the murder is out at last. I have this day and hour received a Civil Epistle from the Marquis to inform me of his intended nuptials, which till now I never thoroughly be-

lieved, or disbelieved ; I need not tell you in how few words, for I daresay you are reading the fellow to it this minute. I suppose he does not know what to say, and he is in the right ; he has only, like a House of Commons address in return to the King's speech, to echo it back again, and there is an end. For my own case and that of my friends, if ever one of Mr. Lewis's devils tempts me into matrimony, I will communicate the intelligence in the same concise manner and save a profusion of lies and nonsense to myself and other people. "It is always better to laugh than cry," says a friend of mine. This is a sort of dubious case where the maxim is of use, and I declare I will not cry. Will you ? For aught we know, she may be a pleasant acquaintance and a comfortable connexion. . . .

I have been very much vexed this day or two. Mrs. Montagu is dead, and has left Mrs. Alison a *mourning ring* ! I never doubted really that she would at least leave them enough to add greatly to their comfort, at least five or six thousand ; indeed, it seems her will has been but lately altered, and for reasons neither unjust nor unkind, her fortune having been unexpectedly, I could almost say miraculously injured ; but that does not hinder one feeling the crush of all hopes at once, after so many years of well-grounded expectation. Oh dear ! oh dear ! it is a cruel stroke, and nothing to soften it. Mrs. Alison writes me word she knew this before, but seems much shocked by her death, and dwells little on the circumstance. . . .

John, fourth Earl and first Marquis of Bute, who had been a widower since January 1800, married, on 7th September, Frances, daughter of Thomas Coutts. He sent the following note to Lady Louisa announcing the event :—

HILL STREET, 3rd September 1800.

MY DEAR SISTER,—Knowing the interest you take in my welfare and happiness, I am persuaded you will receive with pleasure the communication of my intended marriage with Miss Coutts, and which will add greatly to the satisfaction of your affectionate

BUTE.

To Lady Portarlington

BOTHWELL CASTLE,
Friday, 22nd October 1802.

MY DEAREST CAROLINE,—I was just upon the point of writing to you when I received your letter yesterday. I am rejoiced you have had such fine weather, though, to be sure, it does make one's mouth water a little to hear of it ; they write the same accounts from England, that is to say, the south of it, but the north is more different from that than usual, for poor Lady Macartney seems to have had as much rain and wind as ourselves. Indeed, I never had a sensation of greater joy than when I received her letter from Port Patrick. I have had none since, so I suppose she will not write till she is settled in London. I must do the weather the justice, however, to say it was very fine last week, but I could not use it to go to Inverary because Monsieur [the Comte d'Artois] came

here, and this week again is quite abominable, so I have finally given it up, for next week are Hamilton races, and, indeed, I suppose Lady Charlotte Campbell, who lies in in November, must be leaving it herself for that operation. You may think yourself well off if I do not pester you with French words and phrases. Talking and hearing nothing else for four whole days has left nothing else in my head. Monsieur brought with him his youngest son, the Duc de Berry, and three gentlemen, the Chevalier de Puységur, a very lively entertaining man ; the Baron de Roll, an honest Swiss, whom I have seen at Lord Macartney's and often at different places in London ; and the Duc d'Harcour, not one of the Harcours so much with Lord Harcourt ; his old Duke is just dead, and this man is a distant relation, came over from Hamburgh to Leith, and has never been in England. It was a long while before he could beat that into my head, for, by way of being very civil to him, I would always talk of the Harcourts, Nuneham, etc. I found afterwards that two young men were his nephews who live very much with General Harcourt, Emanuel and Amadée Harcour. The latter has married that very pretty Sophy Harcourt whom you may have seen, Richard Harcourt's daughter, and, I believe, heiress ; so he is quite Anglified, and as John Bull would not understand what sort of a beast Amadée could be, they call themselves Mr. and Mrs. Charles Harcourt. Monsieur himself is a very handsome healthy-looking man, remarkably

well made, above the middle size and stout. He looks much younger than his age (45), and has a splendid open countenance but his mouth does not shut, the upper lip being too short. For his air and manner, it is as I will not say gentleman-like only, but noble and prince-like, as you can imagine, with that sort of high and dignified good breeding, that gracious civility to everybody (with, at the same time, the greatest ease) you would expect from a prince bred in the politest court of Europe. He has not so fine an air and is not nearly so handsome as *our* Prince, but I fancy excels him in conversation, because that is easy and pleasant without mimicry or determination to laugh at something, in short, like any other agreeable man ; but there is so great a resemblance of manner to the Prince, and also to the P.'s father, tho' the latter, dear good man, is you know, *gauche* and awkward and Monsieur the reverse, that I should have said anywhere, " Why, that man looks like something royal." As for his son, nobody would find him out for a prince or a gentleman, and less for a soldier than either, tho', poor youth ! he has passed his life in hard warfare, having always served with the Armée de Condé, and, they say, behaved extremely well. But his appearance is against him ; he is little, thick, stumpy and slouching, with a very ugly brown face that might be fifty years old and a sullen down look, yet certainly does not seem to want sense or observation. If his mother were like him in person it may account for some of poor Mon-

sieur's past irregularities, for she must have been very disgusting to a gay young prince whom all the pretty women in France are desirous to attract, very different from our poor little friend, Madame de Can : [*sic* ?] who was his first flame. We were very lucky in having fine weather while they stayed, as they went out shooting in the morning. By the bye, this gave me an opportunity of observing that men can be just as illiberal and narrow-minded as women, even very ignorant and frivolous women, for no misses could have been more disposed to quiz some poor person, their superior in sense and character, for not being exactly dressed in the fashion of the day than our gentlemen were these Frenchmen for not shooting exactly in the English manner, as if it were the most contemptible thing in the world and the business itself was one of importance instead of a diversion. Their good luck ended, I think, with their visit here, for they went from hence to Hamilton, and it has been blowing and raining ever since. On Wednesday they were to go to the Duke of Montrose's. That day Sir James and Lady St. Clair and Lady Mary Erskine came from Hamilton hither. Lady S. is a very agreeable woman, tho' I never can help suspecting Mrs. Bouverie's daughter in some respects, and at her heart a great democrat. However, she is a good wife (tho', I think, evidently not attached to him as he is to her) and a very fond mother. She has brought her children here. Poor people, they lost either four or five one after

the other before these were born, so one does not wonder these are precious. The eldest is a little girl nearly two years old, and the picture of her father ; indeed, her little face brings to my mind that of Sir Harry [Erskine] as I saw it when I was a baby myself, and she has just that sort of set colour in her cheeks. There is a boy of six months old too, with a pair of great eyes and just the look of Lord Rosslyn. The little girl is very little and thin, but the boy looks a fat, healthy baby. I hope they will keep them. Lord and Lady Dalkeith are also come, and stay for the races. They brought with them a Polish Count whom it is the fashion to reckon very like our niece Mary. He is gone away on a tour to the Highlands in this pretty weather, but returns Monday. You see we are devoured with foreigners. The Hamiltons have another prince, the Duc de Montpensier (the Duke of Orleans' brother), and expect his cadet, the Comte de Beaujolais, from Inverary, and they have had a German count and a Venetian one. But there they are all well placed, for the Marquis of Douglas is much more a foreigner in his ways than an Englishman. Nobody can say that of the Baron. If he really is a Frenchman by birth, as his enemies would fain have proved him, God knows he has no traces of it in character or manners. In return for all my princes and counts you must send me the history of your vice-king¹ and queen, if they visit you. And so adieu ! for I must write a few lines

¹ Earl of Hardwicke, Viceroy of Ireland.

to Lady Macartney, and fear being too late for the post, which very often happens to me. God bless you, my dearest Caroline.

To Lady Portarlington

BOTHWELL CASTLE, 5th October 1804.

MY DEAREST CAROLINE,—I received your letter of Sept. the 24th last week at Inverary Castle, and was quite delighted with its cheerfulness, and with your account of the affectionate reception you met with from the tenantry. On my part, I have been wandering on the face of the earth (and water) for a fortnight past, and now shall sit down and give you an account of my adventures. Lady Lonsdale and I hired horses at Glasgow (for there are no post-horses in the Highlands), and set out on Saturday the 22nd in my chaise, with her maid and my man. It rained torrents, so while we were at Glasgow we could not stir out of the shop where we first landed, and the same bad weather pursued us all along the beautiful road by the side of the Clyde to Dumbarton. Then it cleared up, but remained blowing and disagreeably cold for two days. We reached Buchanan (the Duke of Montrose's) by dinner-time. Lady Douglas and Fanny were there before us. It was one-and-twenty years since I had been there, and the place has been in that time, I will not say improved, but created. There was nothing to begin with but a few good trees and a wretched old house, to which the Duke has added wings, mean-

ing some day or other to pull down the old part and connect them by a new building. His plantations are immense, and his shrubberies, gardens, farmyards, piggeries, etc. etc., are all in the nicest order. But the house stands in the middle of a large plain, and though but three miles from Loch Lomond, all is such a dead flat, that you catch a view of the lake only from one single window in my bedchamber, which to me was quite tantalizing, and as my two legs will carry me any day in the week to just as neat places in the Edgware Road, I grudged a little the time we stayed there. However, after reconnoitring all this on Sunday, the Dutchess carried us on Monday along the side of the lake, and Tuesday upon it, and on Wednesday we left Buchanan, nothing loth. The Dutchess is, I believe, really a most respectable character, but has a coldness of manner and a constant reserve that chills you ; and he, now the fine man is worn off, remains only dull and rather pompous, so the weight of their society equals that of (*entre nous*) my friends the Nisbets, and the evenings were so long, so long, that I wanted to go to bed and have done with it at ten o'clock, the children, the governess (a little lively French girl), and everything else in such order that it sunk one's spirits, and even in our parties to see things, between the Dutchess's silence and our good sister's no silence, one could not enjoy romantic scenery in the least comfort. Well, on Wednesday we were to decamp, and go on the other side of the lake to Luss, and then pro-

ceed to Arrochar, a single house, the road to which, and its awfully wild situation, Lady Douglas had charged us particularly to observe. She had also told us that possibly they would offer us their horses to go up to Rowardennan (the place to which the Dutchess had already carried us on their side of the lake), and then ferry over and have our own to meet us, but we had much better not accept this, because we should just lose seeing the prettiest part of the road. They made us no such offer, however, but only advised us to go that way as much the shortest, so Lady Lonsdale calls to me across the breakfast table, "Oh, do you know, here is the Dutchess, who says we are quite wrong; we ought to go to Rowardennan, and ferry over, and we shall save several miles by it," just as if she had not heard Lady Douglas as well as I, or was in a hurry to travel post to some particular place, instead of wanting to see the country, and going for that very purpose. I was quite confounded, and began stammering a remonstrance. "Oh, but the Dutchess says so and so." I remonstrated on, for besides that it was pretty provoking to let the first person you met persuade you to let alone seeing what you were paying above two guineas a day for horses on purpose to see, some of the native visitors had happened to tell me that the ferry was a very bad one, and hardly ever used for horses and carriages, and you know I have some reason to remember an unsafe ferry, so I could not give up that point, and the Duke (who, I suppose, thought

me very cross and obstinate) said, laughing, "Well, I see Lady Louisa has settled in her own mind that she will not go by Rowardennan, so we need talk no more about it." This ended he begins, "Well, if you go by Luss, you ought to see Dr. Stewart, the minister of Luss; he travelled with your eldest brother to the Hebrides, and he will be so glad to see you and go with you to the Islands, etc." I was going to answer that we should have no time, meaning to reach Arrochar by daylight, but Lady Lonsdale accepted the offer of being recommended to Dr. S., so I could not contradict her. When lo ! says a Mr. and Mrs. Colquhoun (pronounce Cohoon), who had come the day before, and whose house was at Luss, "Dr. Stewart is absent at present." Thank heaven, thought I; but Lady Lonsdale was so sorry that I sat *frying* because I felt it was next to impossible that these people should not offer to go home and receive us themselves, and she asked them so many questions, that so, in short, they did; she apologized, from seeing me look in despair, but at last the Duke whispered we should affront them, and so we were in for it. When we arrived at the Leven, the river which is the outlet of Loch Lomond into the Clyde and sea, we found a ferry to be crossed there. We went over in a separate boat, and we found the carriage and horses were to cross separately, and a very slow, awkward business it was, but two carriages and two pair of horses just doubled the time, and thus our being in their company dawdled

away three-quarters of an hour we might have been going on to Luss. When we got into the carriage again, I besought her to bid the driver come for us when he had rested his horses at Luss, and say then we must go. This she promised, but finding the wife and daughter pretty genteelish sort of Englishwomen (who wore rouge), got so well acquainted, and talked so fast, and settled herself so comfortably, that there was literally no getting her away ; and after playing at visiting and dining in a room hot enough for a furnace, she let the horses wait a full hour and a quarter at the door, and we at last set out after sunset to go a stage that took up three hours at a foot's pace, exactly losing the most beautiful part of the road, and had the night proved cloudy, risking our necks over the precipices, for there was no moon. We arrived at Arrochar (whose romantic situation the Douglasses had rung in my ears for a week) in the dark, and we left it next morning in a thick fog. To be sure, I did vow to myself never to go a-rambling again with a companion of so very different a humour. I am ashamed to remember now how angry and sulky I felt at being so tantalized. . . . The day, Wednesday the 20th, was so beautifully fine, and the evening so delicious, that it was doubly provoking to have it thus thrown away. To be sure Mrs. Colquhoun carried us to an island we had not seen before, but we could have gone just as well from the inn, and spent double the time on the water, if we had not been tied to their company and

obliged to go back and sit in a parlour of ten feet square to be civil ; and the beauty of the whole was that they had not intended going home that day, were forced to send a servant on to have preparations made for our entertainment, and, in short, were just as much put out of their way as I was out of mine, but thought (with some justice) that Lady Lonsdale had given such broad hints for an invitation, they could not help themselves. To have done with my grievances, the road from the invisible Arrochar goes through Glencroe, a famous pass in the Highlands, one of the most awful rocky scenes I ever beheld, but when you come down to Inverary all is beauty as well as grandeur. It certainly is the finest place I ever saw in my life and has no fault excepting that the hill you see immediately across the lake from the house is too bare and of too even and dull a line for beauty, and that the house itself is not a pile of building sufficiently large to suit the immense scale of everything else. The lake Loch Fyne is salt water, an arm of the sea, and not a hundred yards from the house. In one side the pretty white town projects into it and forms a bay. In the other, an immense rocky hill rises, covered with wood almost to the summit, on which stands a watch-tower. But description is vain—one should give a catalogue. You see at once a range of woody hills, I daresay several miles in extent, with mountains rising over them. You have the lake before you and a rapid river falling into it, a beautiful lawn scattered with

very fine single trees, three or four handsome bridges, the town, church, etc., an avenue of fine old beech trees, above a mile long, another river, which issues from a freshwater lake in a woody valley that would alone make a very fine place. But I suppose one might pass half a year there and every day see something new, and we only stayed five days. I liked the people very much as well as the place; in every respect it was the reverse of Buchanan, and a little in the Castle Rack-rent style. The Duke is eighty-three and a charming old man, with all his faculties, but of course not very attentive to his household concerns, though very much so to his farm and estate. Lady Augusta is dejected and indolent and will not take the management of anything. Lady Charlotte is the younger sister and only a visitor, so feels she must not meddle. Therefore the servants do exactly what they think proper, and it is Confusion Castle with a witness, as nobody willingly troubles the good old Duke with complaints, and when his back is turned it is well if anybody will answer a bell or bring a single thing you want. The dinner is also abominably dressed, but nobody cares. Sometimes Lord Lorne goes into the kitchen and bustles to get the potatoes well boiled, but he relapses into indolence and the next day 'tis just the same. By the bye, he is a most pleasant engaging sort of being. How very provoking he did not choose to find out he could love Lady Charlotte Villiers and marry her, as he certainly might have done if he pleased. Now I

fear between Lady William Russell and the gaming table, whenever the Duke dies there will be an end of this fine place and of every comfort to the family. Lady Charlotte is a sweet creature and her character as well as her beauty improves upon a nearer view. I wish she were better bestowed than on that great fellow her husband, but she loves him tenderly and he is after his fashion fond of her. This is Saturday. The post-time has overtaken me and I must conclude in haste. We returned here Thursday night and at present we are the only company. God bless you and so I finish.

To Walter Scott

BOTHWELL CASTLE, 11th November 1807.

MR. SCOTT must have thought me very ungrateful in returning no acknowledgements for being *entrusted* with *Marmion*, but I was prisoner with so severe a cold the last week I stayed at Dalkeith that I could not attempt writing. Lady Dalkeith undertook the care of the parcel, which I hope has been safely restored ; but now my head is clear enough, I must tell you how much pleasure it gave me, and that this pleasure rose still higher on reading it over and over again. Like the *Lay*, it carries one on, and one cannot lay it down. It is, I feel, a great piece of presumption in me either to commend or criticise ; but one passage, I confess, strikes me as more feeble than the rest, though by itself, or in a less spirited poem, I should perhaps

never have affix'd to it that epithet. What I mean is that part of the introduction to the third Canto where you begin to give Mr. Erskine your reasons for not adopting his advice ; it immediately follows the compliment to Miss Baillie. Yet even in this the picture of the old Highland drover is beautiful. What ensues upon Smailholme Tower, etc., I was particularly charmed with, but I shall not pretend to point out all the beauties in this note. Lady Douglas desires her best compliments and thanks for your letter, and is very anxious that you should find time to give her the few days you partly promise. So am I, for many little particulars might be much better talked over than written about.— I am, sir, your much obliged and obedient

L. STUART.

To Walter Scott

GLOUCESTER PLACE, [April] 1808.

DEAR SIR,—You will think it is a persecution when you see my hand again, but I have a ridiculous grievance that if you cannot redress, perhaps you can at least help me to understand.

When I first came to town my sister Lonsdale told me, laughing, she had heard news of me ; a very great Lady of your acquaintance had informed her that I was publishing a volume of poems at Edinburgh. Lady L. replied it was very unlike me, when the [Princess] with a peremptory “ I *know* it to be true ” reduced her to silence. I

hooted at this, as you may suppose, but concluded her R.H. had mistaken some other person's name for mine, and thought little more about the matter till yesterday, when my sister, who had again had the honour of dining at Blackheath, acquainted me that the Princess asked her before a large company whether I had yet let her into the secret of my publication. She repeated as far as respect would permit what I had myself said on the subject ; but the Princess more positively than before silenced her with "*I know it ; I tell you it is so ;* and if she will not trust you, then I will ; for I am to have a copy ; there are to be but fifteen printed, and Mr. Skene (Mr. Skene ! my dear Mr. Scott, whom I never saw in my life ! or heard of till you read us the epistle to him at Bothwell !!!)—Mr. Skene has promised me one, which I will let you see when I get it. I believe Lady Louisa's name is not to be put to it, which I daresay is what she means by denying it."

Some of the company on this enquired what her R.H. was talking of. She turns to them, "I was only mentioning some poems of Lady Louisa Stuart's that she is publishing at Edinburgh."

I hardly know whether I am awake or dreaming while I write this curious conversation ; but upon my word it would provoke a saint.

Imagine that neither my above-mentioned sister, nor any other member of my family, ever saw a verse of mine since I was seventeen, or had one in their possession ; and that many of them, and

several of my most intimate friends, to this hour do not suspect I ever wrote one. It is really too hard upon a poor snail to be dragged by the horns into the high road, when it is eating nobody's cabbages, and only desires to live at peace in its own shell. However, if I could be certain the lye was a lye of the best and honestest kind, unadulterated by any faint mixture of something like truth, I should make up my mind to patience, as if it were reported I had stood upon my head, or married my footman. But, my dear sir, your theft of "Ugly Meg" comes very unpleasantly to my recollection; not that I can or will suspect you (for all the Princesses in Europe) of playing me so unfair and barbarous a trick, as it would be to come within a hundred miles of verifying her R.H.'s assertion; but I am sadly afraid that there lies the ground the story has been built upon; and that is bad enough to me. Mr. Skene being thus quoted by name, you may be able to find out—I dare not write it in English—*que diable veut dire tout ça?*

If "Ugly Meg" has the least share in it, I do most earnestly beg and beseech you, gratify me by putting her in the fire. I don't know whether the man in the old story was right when he called it a woman's highest praise not to be talked of one way or the other; but I am sure it is her greatest blessing, and only way of living in comfort. At any rate I entreat, nay (forgive the word!) insist, that when you visit this part of the world, you neither show it nor repeat it to the great lady in question,

nor tell her anything about me. I would rather of the two see it in the *Morning Post* outright, for the currency of a newspaper is nothing to the gossip of a court. The former can tell a fact, false or true, but one way at once ; the latter varies, and multiplies, and modifies it in so many, that it becomes past the power of the first relater to guess it ever was his own story, before it had been half an hour out of his mouth.

Now I have said thus much, another conjecture has struck me ; may it not be Mr. Alison's funeral sermon on Sir Wm. Forbes, of which there were but a few copies printed, and some of those few have gone through my hands to people who were anxious for it here ? Mr. Skene may come in very naturally there. My friend's sermon being converted into a poem of mine, tho' it sounds like one of Harlequin's transformations, might be effected in the course of tattle through a very few tongues.

Dear Mr. Scott, pardon my worrying you with this tedious letter, and if you can quash the nonsense that extorts it from me, or expound the riddle, you will very much oblige, yours, etc. etc.,

L. STUART.

To the Hon. George Dawson

LONDON, 3rd February 1813.

I scarce know how, my dearest George, to address you at this moment, yet, well knowing what your feeling will be, I know not how to delay doing so,

as I find by some mistake no letter was written to you last week to tell you the afflicting event which has taken place, and the irreparable loss you have sustained in the death of your most excellent and affectionate mother. I have been so struck and miserable myself, I know too well what your feelings will be ; the only consolation is to think her illness was short, and I trust from every account not suffering. She was taken ill on Saturday the 15th, and expired on the 20th. Alas ! my dear George, I cannot attempt to dwell on what I am sure will affect you as nearly as it does myself, and every one who ever knew her. She, alas ! would not believe herself in danger, altho' she said except for her children's sake she had no wish [for] her life to be prolonged. Fortunately, Henry was at Came near them, and dear Lady Macartney wrote to request your sisters and him immediately to Chiswick. They came there last Saturday, after the sad ceremony was performed at Milton Abbey. Harriet is now at Lady Caroline's, and Louisa, Anna Maria, and Henry at Lady Macartney's. I hear Lord Portarlington is arrived and Sir H. Parnell, but I have seen no one yet of the family but Harriet and Car. I mean to-morrow to go to Chiswick. I hear Louisa has supported herself wonderfully, and I hope in God to find her better than I dared to expect. I also hear Lady Caroline Damer has acted with great kindness to them. This is a consolation, as the comfort to your excellent mother would be great to know they were well

taken care of. Oh, my dear George, this is a heavy stroke, and one I felt little prepared to bear. I fear that will also be your case. Your letters were a great delight and comfort to her, but I lament to say your last only arrived the day which she expired. God bless you. I can add no more, my heart is so oppressed, but believe me always one of your most attached friends and affectionate aunt,

LOUISA STUART.

I am now staying with Lady Lonsdale, who desires to be kindly remembered to you all in great affliction, as you may easily imagine.

To Walter Scott

CHISELHURST, Jan. 11, 1817.

DEAR MR. SCOTT,—Perhaps this is a quicker return of fire than you reckon upon, but I want, like a trusty spy, to impart all my intelligence. First, let me say though, that I feel the value of your confidence and return you sincere thanks for it. Thank you a little also for the diversion it makes me share,—something similar to one I used to take formerly by going disguised to ladies who saw masks, in days when, from shyness, I did not love to hear the sound of my own voice. Hiding my face set my tongue at liberty, and as my habits were always retired, I was precisely the last person in London whom my nearest friends could suspect of being the mask that teased them. Then came

the enjoyment of their different accounts and conjectures for a week afterwards ; and if I asked an innocent question—" Pooh ! it's a sort of thing *you* can't enter into." You see I have been in training for a conspirator.

With the same amusement I now sit by the fire, sucking in the sagacious remarks I hear. Says one, who has a favourite relation that writes—what nobody reads—" I am clear this ¹ is not by the author of *Waverley* ; it is too good. *Waverley* was certainly Scott's : now Scott could not write this, it is above him, and there is not that constant description of scenery that makes him so tiresome " —delighted all the while to put the unknown author over the admired one. But in particular commend me to the story sent us from Scotland ! The murder is out, and it does not signify disputing. Mrs. Thomas Scott owns all the four books to be hers, with some help from her husband, and some licking over by her brother-in-law. One might reply :—" Verily I think the 'oman be a witch, indeed I do spy a great peard under her muffler." ² I could not help saying to Lady Douglas that most likely Mrs. T. Scott had never owned any such thing ; but in case it were proved she had, it would convince me they were altogether yours, and you had spread the report yourself in order to see how absurd a one the world could be brought to swallow ; since Mother Pratt's peard was not half so evident. For I do like the judge who told Barrington the

¹ *Tales of My Landlord.*

² *Merry Wives of Windsor.*

pickpocket, he had tried him as if he had never seen his face before. I endeavour to forget that I *know* a word of the matter, so am free to say what I believed the first hour I read *Waverley*, and should have gone on believing ever since, had you denied the charge with ever so good a grace. I keep to the evidence before me ; and how any one can have a doubt, is past my comprehension. Not for the anecdotes—"they're yours, were mine, and might be told to thousands—but the little touches, the modes of expression, the slight words that raise a picture to one's mind with all the force of a long simile, the hints which in the same way awaken feeling or excite deep reflection, much more that I cannot describe, render it as distinguishable as a man's handwriting. And this people every day swear to, without being able to explain the certainty which yet they feel they have, that it is John's and not Richard's." . . .

In general the coterie here are disposed to think it not by the same author as *Waverley*, etc., and to think it superior to all three. I myself place it above Guy and Monkbarns, but *Waverley* being my first love, I cannot give him up. *As a whole*, however, I believe it does bear the palm, and it surprises me by not sinking into flatness, after the return of Morton from abroad ; which was a very slippery place for *you*, who profess never knowing what you are going to write. . . .

I must mention a remark Mrs. Weddell has repeatedly made : " This has the *nature* of Daniel

Defoe's novels, tho' with a higher style of writing. I can hardly forbear fancying every word of it true." And we are all agreed that instead of perverting history, it elucidates it, and would give a person partially acquainted with it the desire to be more so. But I am afraid the wise young people of these days, familiar with hydrogen and nitrogen, and Pentandria Monogynia, do not read history at all. Indeed, *forbye* the young, I have met with an established Blue-stocking who had never heard of Sir William Temple, and seemed only just to have found out that there was such a person as Lady Russell. . . .

L. STUART.

To Miss Louisa Clinton

DANESFIELD, *September 29* [1818].

MY DEAR LOU,—For so I see I must take the freedom of calling you. Lady Louisa will have told you that she did not forward your letter for a week, and I have not had it in my power to answer it directly ; nor can I write much now, as we are going out early. Be assured I shall always like to hear from you, though I fear I shall make only a poor return. To waive speeches, however, let me now ask a further account of your Tunbridge adventures. I would fain hope you made some pleasant acquaintance there amongst the human beings, besides the rocks and woods you had to reconnoitre. I agree with you about Penshurst. I never saw a place that less recalled to me the

memory of its former possessors. I was told that much of the wood had been cut down, and the most beautiful part of the grounds sliced off to make another place near it. When I was there, it looked desolate and belonged to a minor. But the residence of a modern family is perhaps yet worse for *classic ground*. Such old scenes had better be neglected than improved ; which commonly means vulgarised. . . . I have been here since Wednesday the 16th. Miss Berry, who I think was the "sprightly lady," has not made one of the party. I found Mrs. Scott and her sister alone, and the only other company have been Mr. and Mrs. Barty Bouverie, and Mr. Arundel Bouverie their son, all of whom I like very much. . . . Their son is very attentive to them, and an intelligent young man, who can read a book, and talk of it rationally, and does not think solely of his neckcloth and pantaloons. I am very sorry to hear little Anne has been ill. I will write to Lady Sh. [Sheffield] or Ly. Chte. [Lindsay] shortly for a more particular account. In the meanwhile give my love to them. I imagine, by what Lady Louisa says, you will be at home before this arrives there. I go on Monday (I believe) to the Duchess of Buccleuch at Richmond, and shall there remain some time. Thank God ! my brother's leg is now quite healed, and he is in many other respects getting well very fast. I have vowed to write by to-day's post, otherwise you should have a longer letter, but the barouche is ordered for an early expedition to Maidenhead

Fair, and I expect to be summoned every minute, therefore must say no more. This is by way of a retaining fee for a further account of yourself. Should it find you still at Tunbridge, remember me most kindly to the Fanshawe family.—Ever, dear Lou, most affectionately yours,

L. STUART.

GLOUCESTER PLACE,
Wednesday morning, 1818.

MY DEAR LOU,—I must thank you for your kind note and very acceptable token, in particular for the little sketches enclosed ; but, my dear child, how far you are from knowing the miserably imperfect character of which you say such things. Things that really answer the description of “satire in disguise,” and make me ashamed to read them : ready to reproach myself for having been very false, if I wore a semblance that could so deceive you—Oberon must have cast his spell on your mind as he did on Titania’s eyes, and I fear you will one day wake and see the ass’s head you worshipped in your state of delusion. However, I am so sure you speak from your heart, that tho’ I feel it is not to me, the me I am, I cannot be otherwise than grateful, nor help wishing that I had any powers of being useful to you. Forgive the haste I write in, remember me most kindly to Lady Louisa, and believe me, affectly. yours,

L. STUART.

RICHMOND, 6th of November 1818.

MY DEAR LOU,—I am much ashamed to see that by the date of your letter it has been in my pocket a full month. Leading an uniform life and having little to say must be my excuse for not writing sooner ; and now perhaps you have nearly forgotten all the entertaining particulars you gave me of your Tunbridge excursion, which are what I am going to answer. I was glad it proved so agreeable, but not sorry for the feelings you express on returning home, where I would always wish you to find your chief happiness. Short absences, however, are wholesome now and then ; you brought back with you, I am sure, increased cheerfulness, and had a greater power of amusing Lady Louisa than before you went away : besides, that mingling with a variety of people has a tendency to enlarge one's mind, which otherwise grows so used to one train of ideas that a difference of taste or opinion almost startles and makes one angry. If the society one is thrown into should be dull and even silly, learning how to bear with it is no trifling point gained ; for according to my favourite La Bruyère, *Ne savoir pas supporter tous les mauvais caractères dont le monde est plein, ne fait pas en soi un trop bon caractère. Il faut écouter Aronce parler proverbe, Melinde se plaindre de vapeurs*—I forget the rest. What you say is true, the Fanshawes have an exquisite taste for natural beauties as painters ; but they do not naturally love the country, possibly because they

were accustomed to lead an uncomfortable life in it. Not that the comparison you make tends in reality to my advantage, for it proves me to be something like a romantic old fool. I remember going to those very rocks you describe when I was first at Tunbridge in '93, the year before Lady Louisa saw Lady Cremorne there ; remember it by the token of finding bad roads, fearing an overturn, getting out and walking, etc. ; but we were luckier than you, for we did arrive at them at last. Lady Cremorne with her Lord and old Admiral Barrington then lodged on the left hand in the steepest part of Mount Zion. I believe they went constantly to Tunbridge for many summers, but she is now too old and infirm to be much away from home. We quite agree about Penshurst,—the most disappointing place I ever beheld. Even five and twenty years ago it had little remains of antiquity, and the pictures were spoiling very fast ; the owner was then a child, but his portion of Sydney blood being sadly diluted in its progress from the last male of the race, I fear he will not know how to set about restoring Penshurst, especially as the estate had faded as well as the portraits before either devolved to him. By the bye, I think I read you Mr. Morritt's account of Hampton Court in Herefordshire, one of the oldest baronial seats in the kingdom, lately purchased by Sir — Arkwright, son of the cotton-mill inventor. I can now tell you the fate of Newstead Abbey. Lord Byron has sold it to a Major Wildman, . . . who has personally

good pretensions to found a new family, as he is a very gallant officer distinguished in Spain and at Waterloo. Accordingly he shows a higher mind than the peer and poet who could sell the seat of his ancestors, for he is repairing and fitting it up with great care to preserve the remains and appearance of antiquity, endeavouring to furnish it suitably, and cherishing the few old trees that Lord Byron has left behind him, taking care also of an old servant who has lived sixty years upon the spot, and who makes some half-crowns by showing his Lordship's drinking-cup, a skull set in silver. Major Wildman's mother is a neighbour of my sister Macartney's at Chiswick, and told me these anecdotes. She said her son found it a scene of miserable desolation. Lord Byron had had the ground immediately round the house dug up to gratify his passion for skeletons ; it was the cemetery of the monks, and their skulls and bones lay scattered under your feet as you went in and out of the doors.

Pray do not follow my bad example and be long before you let me hear from you again. I wish particularly to know how Lady Louisa does, as you expressed some anxiety with regard to her health. The autumn has been so uncommonly fine and in general so dry that I think it cannot be unwholesome for anybody. You must likewise give me an account of your grandfather and Lady Sheffield, for tho' I write a few lines to her, I shall tell her that I expect she will make you her secretary if she

has not leisure to answer me. And now, dear Lou, believe me, affectionately yours, L. STUART.

To Walter Scott

GLOUCESTER PLACE, August 11, 1819.

DEAR MR. SCOTT,—Do not suppose, however, that I am at present reading the [*Bride of Lammermoor* and *Legend of Montrose*] for the first time. I have had it by heart these five weeks. It possesses the same power of captivating the attention as its predecessors ; one may find this or that fault, but who does not read on ? The Master of Ravenswood is perhaps the best *lover* the author ever drew ; and oh ! how glad I was to hear the true notes of the old lyre in Annot Lyle's matin song ! And why no more ? Where are the good couple who concealed the Regalia from Cromwell's soldiers ? I am sensible that the actor should always leave the stage before the spectator is tired, but I verily believe that nobody is tired. If no more exactly thus, however, may there be much more in some other way ! Meanwhile I believe most people would say of the four-and-twenty volumes, what I have known the parents of large families do of their children : “ You may think them a great many, yet there is not one we could spare.” For my own part I acknowledge I am not a fair judge ; all these writings, all the author's works confessed and unconfessed, are so much associated in my mind with, not the earliest, but the pleasantest,

part of my life, that they awaken in me many feelings I could hardly explain to another. They are to me less like books, than like the letters one treasures up, "pleasant yet mournful to the soul," and I cannot open one of them without a thousand recollections that as time rolls on, grow precious, although they are often painful. Independent of this, how many hours of mine have they soothed and softened ! and still do soothe and soften, for I can read them over and over again.

. . . It grieves me to think of all you have gone through. I am told you are not so careful of yourself as you should be, but I would fain suppose that arises from feeling an inward vigour still remaining, which sensation is one that promises a return of health. For surely you would not be wilfully negligent of the welfare of all who love and depend upon you. I cannot believe it.

To Miss Louisa Clinton

FULHAM, *Thursday, 21st of October* [1819].

NOW, MY DEAR LOU,—I will sit down to pay my debts to you. I have had several letters to write, and so little leisure here, that I could not have given you more than a short note if I had begun writing before. I am reading over all your bits and scraps in the first place in due order as they come, that notice may not be omitted of anything claiming it. Lady Sheffield seems very much to wish Mrs. Brodrick would come, and thus far I do

not doubt that she would derive satisfaction from the visit; it would please her to think she had received and comforted what remains, and is in some sort the representative of an old and dear friend: just the feeling I have myself. Otherwise it would not be good company for her or any nervous person, there is something almost catching in that kind of agitation; and in the main, one always feels the want of the *mind* one was used to, fifty times the more from the likeness, which is not merely personal, but extends to voice, to manner, to laugh, to gestures (independent of nervous twitchings), and above all, to turns of phrase and expressions. Besides having thoroughly known her poor mother's value, she is continually alluding to something she did or said. And yet she is so unlike her. If you were to be two hours an auditor of her conversation you would say so too. Now poor Mr. Edward Hamilton, who had the same strong resemblance, and yet was very far from being Mrs. Preston's equal in understanding, did not disappoint one in the same manner. Their minds were also alike, came out of one mould, though one was of a stronger material than the other and had taken a finer shape. Poor Mrs. Brodrick, naturally weaker, has associated with affected people, with *exclusives* and *exquisites* everywhere, till she does not know what is sophistry and what is sterling metal, especially in matters of sentiment, for her principles are, as she first learned them, perfectly good. You would perceive in her something you

could not rightly understand, because you have never been accustomed either to very fine people, or to those who aspired to imitate them ; anybody who has, would find the key of a thousand things she says directly.

I need not say that these observations are for your own ear alone (or Lady Louisa's) ; I would not make them (perhaps hardly allow them to be made) where there was no tenderness for Mrs. P.'s memory to claim indulgence for the little foibles of what she loved best upon earth.

Pray tell Lady Louisa that I have been reading the last *Quarterly Review* (No. XLII) more steadily than I could do at Sheffield Place, and quite agree with her in liking the article upon our statute laws, which is very clear and convincing, and pleased me better than anything else in it, though I think it is on the whole an amusing number. Mr. Humboldt and his (*crodo, crodo*) crocodiles (I can't spell) entertained me ; the account of Hayti was interesting ; the first dissertation (on Aristophanes) and the last. Yet I am no convert to Messrs. Whistlecraft & Co., I cannot like slipshod verse or be convinced that it is not as easily written as read ; the burlesque of one country can hardly ever be well copied in the language of another. As for Plato and Xenophon, it revolts all my old prejudices to hear them discussed as if they were members of the Alfred, or the French Academy—to be told that Plato had delicacy of *tact* taught him at the *court* of Dionysius. It puts me in mind of Gray's

simile about some book upon antiquity which he says was like an antique statue dressed in a negligee made by a Yorkshire mantua-maker. Plato was a human being, I daresay, and could we all see him arise again, we might be surprised and disappointed at finding him far more like other human beings than we could have imagined, just as a child is when it first discovers that kings and queens are men and women ; but Plato and tact sounds like Plato and puppy, an incongruous mixture of ancient and modern, such as only suits the language of second-rate novels. Lady Morgan, I suppose, talked of tact in her *Ida of Athens*. I have just recollected a blunder—Mr. Gray's simile was on the tragedy of Agis—not that it signifies much. Between you and Lady Charlotte, here are indeed some precious anecdotes of Mr. Barr ; he is out-doing himself, and if, as you pretend, he is afraid of me, he has given himself his full career since I went away. *Theeology* indeed ! Do not triumph over me because you have no bad habits to conquer at Quadrille. Some day you will find it necessary to learn whist or casino, and then playing out of your turn will have worse consequences, penalties to pay, and a partner to be scolded by. I cannot regret Lady Shelley's not having come to Shefd. Place while I was there, tho' I am aware that a little of her must be very diverting, but a whole day would probably have been too much, unless with the addition of seeing her protect the Duke of Wellington, and I suppose show him off as her own

proper lion. This class of pretending, puffing, pushing people is now too common and numerous to amuse one as they used to do when one, by great chance, stumbled upon a single individual instance once in two or three years. They swarm like your friends the ants, and instead of encouraging them for the joke-sake, or to study varieties of character, it becomes one's object to brush them off and keep clear of the nuisance.

I grant that, to the best of my knowledge, you have been a very good girl. And you must not relax, but grow more good, taking pains to amuse and support Lady Sheffield when Lady Charlotte leaves her, which I grieve to hear will be a good deal sooner than they thought when I went away. By the bye, I saw very well how you got the better of yourself at that moment, and it was not lost upon me. I dare seldom preach self-command and control ; conscience bars it ; as, in spite of all you dream and fancy, I cannot conceal from myself that if you knew the whole of me even at present, much more if you had witnessed the past, you would be sensible I was a better warning than example, though it might half break your heart to be convinced of it. But I am only the more deeply sensible of the duty of that self-conquest I never obtained, and the more desirous you should in advanced life have that comfortable retrospect which I cannot enjoy. In some circumstances manual labour is all we have for it, and therefore chiefly I wish you could at times (particularly at

such times) have the resource of working within doors. I have often owned to you that I did not when I was young, so much the worse for me—but when young I had less occasion for it, because I was far from having your keen sensibility. That *organ* (in the Spurzheim dialect) did not manifest itself till later in life. Then I sewed and hemmed when otherwise I should have gone out of my senses, and the stillness and monotony of the occupation tended to calm my nerves, which would have been farther agitated by anything that required an exertion of bodily strength. “*Mais les sottises des pères sont perdues pour les enfans,*” says a French proverb. I fear it is almost impossible to profit by anybody’s experience but one’s own.

My sister Lonsdale was very ill when I came hither a week ago, but has mended every day. She is not so strong as your grandfather, therefore when the threatening of a serious attack obliges them to take away blood, she feels shattered and weak for some time. Now I think she is returning fast to be as well as she was before, and this marvellous sudden premature winter has not as yet done her any harm. I am really anxious to know that he does not suffer from it either ; it is a trial to people past eighty. Thus you see you will have a lawful excuse for writing as soon as you please, and indeed if you want a further, you may make haste to tell me how the weather has agreed with Lady Louisa, to whom I beg to be most kindly remembered. Direct to Gloucester Place, for I believe I shall not

stay here many days longer.—Ever affectionately
yours,

L. S.

Pray do not forget to thank Maria for being sorry I was gone ; tell her I think it *piercing*.

GLOUCESTER PLACE,

Wednesday evening, 26th Jan^y [1820].

MY DEAR LOUISA,—Your letter of the 22nd was forwarded to me by Lady Montagu to-day. Before I left Ditton I had begun an answer to your former one of the 7th, but I could not finish, and burned it. The newspaper told me what had happened, therefore you were much in my thoughts, and it hurt me not to tell you so, only I wanted time and composure of mind. I was employed in arranging and new classing the library, and glad to be relieved by that mechanical operation from painful thoughts that recurred whenever it was suspended. I know not whether you ever heard of Mrs. Hoare of Beckenham, poor Mrs. Weddell's dearest friend, and long, very long, through her an intimate of mine ? When young, I sought the society of people older than myself, and of those to whose understanding I could look up. Mrs. Hoare was of the number, one of those distinguished persons whose abilities and attractions set them at the head of whatever society they belong to. She was the pillar and ornament of Mrs. Weddell's, her conversation was a feast, her taste in most respects a guide. Alas ! she is gone, and that set of company is now a wreck, broken to pieces and deprived

of what bound it together. I left her in town in perfect health. She wrote me an account of Mrs. Weddell (who is much the contrary) since the new year began. I answered her, and, when I expected a reply, came a letter from Mrs. Weddell herself, by which I found some great shock had happened to her ; and by those she named as fellow-mourners, I came to the knowledge of what it was by degrees, for at first I hardly comprehended her meaning. However, I read over again your letter of the 7th, and only entered the more into your feelings, therefore began, as I said above, a letter I meant to finish last Monday. But Sunday brought me one from the medical man who attends my sister Lonsdale, informing me she had been less well, and so plainly implying alarm that I hastened to town on Monday intending to lodge myself at a hotel till my own house could be made ready. My servants, however, exerted themselves, and I was able to sleep in my own bed without catching cold. Lady L. is better, but still far from well, having had a good deal of fever. Lockley hopes to bring her through it. Yet, as she wants only a few days of eighty-two, there must be fear as well as hope, and meanwhile I stay here, in an unsettled, uncomfortable manner. The Montagus urged me to promise I would return if easy about her. I know not what I may do. At present that moment is not quite come, so there is no choice to be made.

Thursday.—My sister is considerably better to-

day, and now I go on to answer your letters. I am glad, my dear Lou, that you do feel a satisfaction in opening your heart to me, where all you confide is safe, and where, you may be assured, your cares and sorrows are not condemned. I have entered into the full meaning of every word you say, and only wonder that at so early an age you should already have acquired so painful a knowledge of the different strings that pull and rend the heart. How well I understand that expression in your first letter, "that you would give years of life to see her face and hear her voice once more!" I wished you could have been thus gratified, had there existed a possibility of it without Lady Louisa's going too. But so trying a scene might have shaken her more severely than you are aware; and when you tell me now of the profound peace and comfort of the departure from life, who could have desired that these should have been disturbed and the mind ruffled by agitation or regret? After the first pangs are over you will be sensible how thankful you ought to be that such was the blessed end of one so dear to you, full of days and honour, nothing to embitter it, nothing to draw the heart aside from its animating hopes of passing into unspeakable felicity. These considerations will in time soften grief and render the recollection of her pleasing, though melancholy. And alas! when once the constitution gives way at so great an age, it is impossible to guess what evils may follow, what suffering of body and failure of mind. The last is of all

things most grievous to behold (or hear of) in one we have loved and respected.

With respect to —, I shall not deny having a very precise comprehension of the state of the case, and therefore I am not going to blame you for not feeling what you cannot feel; only be watchful over yourself, my dear girl, and guard against the sort of disgusts which it is too natural for a character so opposite to your own to inspire. I will speak with the fullest confidence. I know what it is full well to live with those who no more understand me, and by whom I am no more understood, than if we spoke a different language. And on this point of *feeling* differently, have I too frequently erred in a manner I shall for ever regret, by indulging either anger or scorn against those who ran pins into me, often without knowing it. At the moment I thought myself justly provoked, but remorse ensued long, long after, when there was no recalling the past. One person very near to me in blood is as precisely my contrary in every thought and inclination as yours. One of the best-tempered and best-natured people on earth, all its inhabitants are nearly alike to her, and tho' she has called many her friends, I never saw her in real affliction for the loss of one. Even if affected for half an hour, she can talk of them next day as tho' they had been dead years, and she cannot comprehend why you should shrink more at the name of one dear to you. Now she is no more blameable for this than for having different-coloured eyes from me. If I

loved music passionately I should not be angry with a person who had no ear, but say nature made her so. Yet often, often have I been angry, have I been insolent to this one of whom I speak, for being what nature made her, and what she cannot help. I tell it you that you may take warning and avoid the self-reproaches I have incurred. Keep it ever in your mind that —— is thus made, and you have no right to find fault with [her]. For what remains, I am so far from advising you to put a force upon yourself and open your heart to her on any distressing occasion, that I beseech you to avoid carefully the sort of irritation which the least approach to doing so would infallibly occasion. Do not oppose her, do not dispute with her ; give way gently (for, thank God ! warm as your heart is, you have a better temper than I), and, as you say yourself, try to suspend thinking in her presence. Do not provoke discussion on painful subjects, compel yourself to talk to her on those most indifferent, the animals, the garden ; it will do you good, as rummaging the books at Ditton did me, by deadening the sense of pain ; and if it proceeds from a real Christian-like wish to conciliate . . . , and a resolution to bear with her, you will feel a self-satisfaction after the effort is over. I am preaching a forbearance I have not practised, do not practise yet ; but then I can best tell the stings of conscience which are the consequence of acting otherwise. When the person is no more, as may shortly be the case, if I do not go first, those stings

will operate tenfold. In short, remember that sublime line in Racine, addressed to a sovereign—

Entre le pauvre et vous, vous prendrez Dieu pour
juge.

We should do the same with our inferiors of every kind—those below us in intellect, those below us in that warmth of enthusiasm or of sensibility which we cannot but look upon as something that exalts others, and therefore we must feel as exalting ourselves. Oh, that I had done the tenth part of what I am counselling you to do! But, dearest Lou, I would fain have the unmerited affection you bestow on me turn to some little use for yourself. As my friends drop off one by one, believe me I often think of it as what Heaven has been pleased to raise up for me to cast a ray of sunshine on the gloom of my latter days. Poor Mrs. Preston used to say I was this unexpected boon of comfort to her, and perhaps she was permitted to bequeath you to me for the same purpose. Do, for Lady Louisa's sake, command yourself, strive to amuse and interest her, and let me soon hear from you again. I will write to Ly. Sheffield soon, the occasion demanding an inquiry after Lord S., altho' I imagine his feelings are too far blunted to be much wrung by the loss of one (Serena) he was not likely to see again. I am grieved to hear she has had St. Anthony. I fear it requires all the uncommon sweetness of her nature to bear those worries you speak of. Well, adieu, for I can scarce

see to write any longer, which informs me five o'clock must be at hand.—Ever afftely. yrs., L. S.

GLOUCESTER PLACE,

Thursday morning, 11 Feb. 1820.

I always forgot to tell you I did what I could for Rebecca Turner, but everybody answered me that there was no occasion to canvass for her, as she was recommended on all sides. Do not let anything make you like that wicked fairy you mention, she does mischief wherever she comes, and it is not safe to speak before her, which I could prove to you if I had a mind. I wish she were Mrs. Bodkin, provided Mr. Bodkin would keep her safe in the city and never let her visit our end of the town again. I am very glad you have enjoyed the court of Hayti, much the best part of the book in my opinion. I only barred your reading it out of propriety and for fear the other Lady Louisa should be scandalized ; pray tell her so. My own notions are that comical books rarely do harm, unless when they try to throw ridicule on sacred subjects ; and, I am tempted to say, “ have fixed principles deeply rooted, and then read what you please.” I agree with her that *Tardif de Courtrac*, tho’ always clever, is sometimes very tedious, especially in America, from one’s indifference respecting the subject. For *Ivanhoe*, make yourself easy, I am its sincere partisan and Rebecca’s devoted admirer. I would rather the templar had burst a blood-vessel, because that is really often the effect of a conflict of violent passions,

and tho' they may bring on an apoplexy also, it is not apt to ensue so immediately. What did I say against charming? I do not recollect. Was not it *sweet*? Whoever converses with Scotch people learns to be sick of that; but it could never be applied to Rebecca. The Lady Rowena, bating her pride of birth and habit of having her own way, is pretty much "a sweet woman." In short, the book has many faults, and one likes it with them all, which is the only way in which human beings or their productions can be fairly and truly liked. Otherwise one's eyes are blinded, and one may as well fall in love with the ass's head, like Titania, as with anything else. Perhaps I could wish Athelstane had not been made such a buffoon-character, or revived to so little purpose. I know not what Prince Leopold will say to it. He had a bad cold, and Sir Robert Gardiner went to keep him company and read *Ivanhoe* to him last Saturday. He was so delighted he would not let him leave off till one in the morning, and entered with the zeal of a contemporary into the Saxon cause. Your castle in the air respecting him is exactly mine; I would have him breed up the heiress, if heiress she should be. Her father [the Duke of Kent] has made her mother sole guardian, therefore in all probability this will be the case if the Clarences have children; but if not, I believe the law gives the reigning sovereign (very justly) a power of interfering. King William assumed that of directing the Duke of Gloucester's education, and George I took his

grandchildren absolutely away from their parents. I should be sadly afraid our present ruler might place his own people about a child so circumstanced; however, the mother and her brother would most likely sway its mind notwithstanding. If the paper to-day speaks truth about the King's sending for the Duke of Sussex, he begins as he should do, for no one's behaviour can have been worse. But they (the newspapers) make me absolutely sick with the stuff they insert about his poor father, sometimes absolutely false, sometimes stories caught by the tail, twisted and blundered, till the original teller could not know them again. Amongst others there is an anecdote about the late Lord Bateman, converted into a wretched pun, the origin of which was a very striking and affecting circumstance, which I myself heard his wife relate the day after it passed. Again we are told that the King heard by chance of an old gentlewoman of the name of Delany in distress, and made some provision for her, but on Lady Harcourt's representation that it was not enough, he added a handsome annuity, etc. All in *charity*, you would think—the old *gentlewoman* (who by the bye was *née Granville* and the last of that noble family) had been familiarly known to the K. and Q. for several years, and peculiarly the object of their respect and affection, when, on the death of her friend the Duchess of Portland, they gave her a house at Windsor and devoted themselves to her comfort like a son and daughter. She was past eighty and quite blind. Lady Harcourt

never saw her in her life till thus installed as their favourite. These awkward praises provoke me more than if they abused him, bringing him down to their own vulgar standard. It will indeed be difficult ever to hear " God save the King " without thinking of that excellent man. But I cannot be in the least a Jacobite until you convince me that any of the Stuarts, on the throne or off of it, had half his worth. Charles the First, I believe, was a good man, and what staunch Whigs call his tyranny and encroachments on liberty, though the people were quite right to resist them if they could, I cannot consider as criminal in the successor of Elizabeth, who, from her example, and that of her immediate predecessors, father and grandfather, must have considered himself as exercising his incontestable rights. But he had not the overflowing benevolence of George III, nor the firmness in what he thought right. Our poor King would never have consented to the execution of Strafford, nor gone to bishops and casuists to know whether if he made a treaty he should be bound in conscience to keep his word. As for the father and the two sons, do you think one could have been attached to them? And the Pretenders James and Charles I take to have been poor creatures, below criticism. Even *Waverley* only describes the latter as handsome and well bred, but what more? Nor would they have had a single adherent in England had the reigning family been English, or even tried to adopt English manners, which none of them did till he, poor man !

came to the throne. His father attempted it a little, calling his daughters *Lady* Augusta, *Lady* Elizabeth, as was the old custom here, but being really a German at heart, could not carry it thro'. And the old King (as I was used to call George II) piqued himself on his dislike and contempt for the country. "You English are none of you well bred, because you was not whipped when you was young," said he to Sarah, Dss. of Marlborough, at their first interview. "Umph," said she, as she told the story, "I thought to myself, I am sure *you* were not whipped when you were young."

Your observation on the Waverley novels is perfectly just; instead of misleading one concerning the true history, or giving one a distaste for it, they make one relish it the better. Whereas Mrs. Radcliffe's, for example, always abound with the most disgusting species of anachronism, the polished manners and sentimental cant of modern times put in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The enlightened philosophy likewise! young ladies arguing with their maids against their belief of ghosts and witches, when a judge durst not have expressed his doubts of either upon the bench. This *palavering* style has crept into history through Miss Aitken, the language of whose memoirs of Elizabeth is so suited to modern notions that Mrs. Scott has said it reminded her of Puddingfield's newspaper¹ in the anti-Jacobin German play. "Magna Charta was signed on Friday three weeks,

¹ See Canning's *Rovers*, Act ii. Scene 2.

and their Majesties, after partaking of a cold collation, returned to Windsor." I have had a letter from Walter Scott lately ; he does not tell me whether he wrote *Ivanhoe*, but he makes as interesting a story from the events of his own family, with which he seems deeply affected, especially at the death of his mother, a very old lady, whom he describes as a most uncommon one. She was struck with a palsy ; her brother, a physician, getting into his carriage the same day, dropped down dead ; and a maiden sister, much younger, died suddenly, ignorant of both events. But alas ! *she* had three nieces living with her : the eldest was so overpowered that the shock took away the use of her limbs, the youngest fell ill and died in her arms, and she has remained speechless ever since. He says I can hardly conceive the melancholy feeling of seeing the family burial-place opened four times within so short a space, amid the same group of surviving relations. But his mother appears to have sat nearest his heart. He had just put his eldest son in the army, and he says her last words to him were, " that as his life now belonged in a particular manner to his king and country, he should think himself peculiarly bound not to endanger his health by idle dissipation." This is true metal, is it not ? Adieu, dear Lou, the post is near going out. I have had the Macleods in town, and Lady Gardiner is staying to lie in, so it has given me some little variety. Mrs. Knox was brought to bed of a daughter yesterday at her father's house. Remem-

ber me to Lady Louisa and Lord and Lady Sheffield, and once more Adieu.—Yours ever, L. S.

Pray write again soon without scruples or excuses, for it will be charity.

Friday evening (25th February 1820),
[GLOUCESTER PLACE].

I did not mean to leave your letter a week unanswered, my dear Lou, but so it has been, and no matter for whys and wherefores. One from me will perhaps be doubly welcome now if you know where Cato Street, John Street, etc., lie, for you may think I was alarmed by the catastrophe of Wednesday night happening so near. On the contrary, I knew no more of it than you did at Clinton Lodge. Lady Emily Macleod dined with me that day (Lady Gardiner being quite well), and we sat together most peaceably in the little back room you know so well, little suspecting the horrors taking place in the neighbourhood. Cross, whose station is to the front, perceived the Life Guards were on the alert, and suspected that something was the matter, but as she is not of that description of servants who run straight open-mouthed to tell you whatever can vex or alarm, she kept it to herself till the newspaper came in with the whole story next day. And a fearful one it is, tho' the discovery most fortunate. Probably they have not yet got at the root of the matter, since it was the first day the ruffians had assembled at that place, bringing their arms with them in sacks, therefore there must have been some

other depot elsewhere ; and no money was found upon any of them, although pistols, swords, hand grenades, and ammunition can as little be procured without it as any other commodity. All this is so unlike old England one wonders where one is. Yet I will name one quarter of the kingdom it does not seem unlike,—the neighbourhood of Manchester—which I must say struck me exactly as it does your Aunt Stanley, though I had no fair broad lands and deep salt-pits to preserve, and when I saw it radicalism was yet unborn. Not even Luddism had then peeped forth, nor was there more reason to think that part of the country disaffected than any other. I think it might be in the year two that I set out to travel through Lancashire to the Lakes, but a festive meeting held once in fifty years called the *Preston Guild* rendered this impracticable. I found every town would be crowded, every house engaged, and giving up my scheme, I crossed from Manchester to Halifax, right through what has now been the disturbed districts—the famous *Oldham*, my first stage. There I remember there was not a horse to be had : I waited two or three hours till the Manchester ones were able to crawl on, a wake or feast being held at the inn and no room of it unoccupied. This is not pleasant, but usually a gay, cheerful scene ; the rustics, even if a little tipsy, look merry and happy, and it does not enter one's head to be afraid of them. On the contrary, I thought I never had seen so savage, so surly, so *dark* a looking set as

these festive *Oldhamites* : there was something in their faces that made one shudder. I crept out and strolled up and down the town, whose inhabitants seemed all of the same description. I said to myself, " These are people who would be fit for any mischief," and I rejoiced to escape the scowling looks they cast on me. Pretty similar were all the villages on my route ; and tho' I found Halifax a very fine town, I hardly ever met with such rudeness and insolence as at the inn—in Yorkshire, where civility and hospitality reign in the merest alehouse ! I am no coward, yet they made me so feel that I was an unprotected woman that they fairly bullied me into going to another town which was not in my road, sulkily saying their horses should *not* go to the one which was, though they condescended to assign no reason. I grew frightened at their tone, and submitted. Whenever I have since heard of disturbances and reformists in that region, the crew at Oldham and the voices at Halifax become present to me. For Manchester, I arrived at one o'clock in the morning, tumbled into bed forthwith, and can only say that when I awaked I thought it lucky that my fatigue and the imperfect light had kept me from perceiving what a very dirty, disgusting place I was to sleep in. And the impertinence of Manchester innkeepers used to be proverbial twenty years before that, as well as their impositions. Indeed, this is usually the case in all great manufacturing towns. Still I do not wonder that gratitude and

goodness are found in the real peasantry, even under the walls of such places : they are a perfectly distinct class. The manufacturers being often, in fact, strangers, for they send hundreds of pauper children from the London parishes (that of Marylebone in particular) to the cotton-mills every year, and these, though young in years, may already be experienced in depravity. To return to our radicals here, a person likely to be well informed told me to-day that Government had intimation of their intentions two months ago, when they had the same scheme of massacring the cabinet ministers at a dinner at Lord Westmorland's, but these eluded the police and escaped being surprised. It was the very day of the Spanish Amb^r's fête, when the mob were so uncommonly riotous and so openly insulted the Regent. Thistlewood was seen by a police officer among them, but perceiving himself observed, instantly vanished.

I have myself had a letter from Lady Charlotte since I wrote to you, and by that I should hope the depression, which Mrs. Scott spoke of as the worst part of the complaint, was dispelled, for she writes cheerfully, but she mentions her illness as only kept under, not gone. I wish she would now think of returning to England, though I am half afraid that when she does she will feel the void made by her poor nephew's death even more than she has yet done. Her letter was written on the day of the Duc de Berri's assassination, which she mentions in a postscript added the next . . . Oh yes !

I do hate marches of ages, and all that vile *slang*, as bad taste, independent of its moral consequences. Nothing corrupts our language so much as using words in the French sense instead of the English one. *Marcher* means simply walking : “ to march,” something so different that the *march* of an age totally alters their metaphors : *la marche du siècle* being the quiet progression of “ th’ inaudible and noiseless foot of time,” instead of its measured, pompous strut.

I enter feelingly into all you say of Lady Louisa, but though I can hardly wish you to be less anxious on the subject than you are, I believe the love of a mother so powerful, so excelling all other love, that I could venture to affirm there is nothing so near her heart as your happiness, therefore you need not scruple to enjoy whatever portion Providence is still pleased to allow you, but be sure that it is reflected back upon her, and gratifies her more than any other pleasure could do. And I always hope that by degrees, if her health improves, you may be able to intice her more into society. Mrs. Knox is going on well. Lady Gardiner, who was brought to bed the same week, *ditto*. I cannot say much for my poor sister Lonsdale, who continues nearly in the same state, and I fear suffers more discomfort and uneasiness (not pain) than in any of her former illnesses, for habitual cheerfulness and love of society has in a great degree forsaken her. Her room is never hot at any time, so you need not fear my being inconvenienced by that,

nor am I ever long together in it, though I see her every day, for she does not like to have anybody sit with her for more than a short time, but grows tired and wishes them away. Lady Macartney has almost resolved to go to Brighton again in spring, the feebleness in her limbs having (alas !) returned with increase.

All this *modern* history has almost made me forget to answer you about more ancient. I can never allow that Charles the First's assent to the attainder of Strafford had anything to do with the age he lived in, whatever consulting casuists might have—it is a thing a weak character would have done at all times, and a strong one (if likewise good) at none. In ours, refusing the royal assent would have been twenty times more difficult, yet I believe George III would have done it, going straight forward to a right point, and leaving the rest to the disposal of God. “*Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et n'ai point d'autre crainte.*”

I finish this Saturday morning. Give my love to Lady Sheffield and write again soon—always remembering me to Lady Louisa.—Ever afftely.
yrs.,L. S.

GLOUCESTER PLACE,
Wednesday, March 22 [1820].

MY DEAR LOUISA,—I was going to upbraid you for your long silence, and to ask whether you thought I grudged sixpence during this interregnum of franks, but on looking over your last letter I per-

ceive it must have been an answer to one of mine, and therefore I am the defaulter. However it may be, I have intended writing these ten days, though something has always intervened to put it off. April approaches, and I hope you will turn your faces towards London one and all, for I presume even my Lord [Sheffield] will have settled his Fletching constables by that time. My sister M. [Macartney] goes to Brighton a fortnight hence, but positively refuses to let me bear her company, so you are pretty sure of finding me here. Indeed near the end of next month I have some hopes of Miss Murray's coming up and being my guest. Lady Lonsdale has been going on better in the main for some time, and now that the weather rather improves, she can sometimes get an airing, which is very beneficial to her.

Thursday.—Thus far had I written yesterday, when twenty interruptions put an end to it for the morning, and your letter arrived. A thousand thanks for it, and for Sir John Stanley's speech, which I like very much, though I own I think he gives a little into commonplace towards the end, when he says the French Revolution would never have happened if so and so—forgetting that the unfortunate sovereign under whom it did happen was religious, moral, and virtuous to the highest degree, solely attached to his own wife,—and it was an old observation that a wife, a Queen's having any influence over her husband was a thing the French at no time could bear—it ever made the govern-

ment unpopular ; but to the most unbounded sway of a profligate mistress they submitted cheerfully as a matter of course. It is true your uncle varies the phrase and says the *Court* of Louis 16. Well then, the Court—the present King, when young, was even ridiculed for his total indifference to the ladies ; the next brother was a man of gallantry, as most young princes are, but in no scandalous or degrading manner. Who among them was an example of eminent vice and profligacy ? Why, truly, Philip of Orleans, the man who himself effected the revolution ; he and his crew were, I believe, vicious beyond measure and without shame. Then, alas ! I am older than Sir John, and well remember when those very virtues of our excellent King which are now the subject of panegyric were that of such extreme ridicule with Mr. Fox and his party ; remember how much that ridicule influenced his son ; what a good joke it was that he would have his coat made (ill enough) by a vulgar English tailor, what a still better that he would be constant to so ugly a woman as the Queen. The conduct, which really proceeded from the firmest principles, was then sneered at as a proof of wanting an enlarged and liberal mind. He was allowed to be mighty good, in a tone implying the notion of his being what you call a poor creature. And there were *some hopes* of the Prince, when he spent four or five thousand pounds upon snuff-boxes and shoe-buckles the first year ; youthful follies—very allowable—it showed spirit that he could not con-

form to the dullness of his father's court. Aye, aye ! something might be made of *him*. This was the current language of some of those who yet survive to rail at his want of economy, and now wish to contrast him with his father. One might say to them : " If the latter's exemplary character *had* any effect on the manners of the age, it was in spite of *you* ; and if the former did not strive to be like him, who took pains to prevent it ? " There is a part of Sir John's speech I think quite beautiful, that which describes the sensation of vacancy ; and his waiving any observations of a political nature is extremely judicious. But I confess I am of opinion that if George 3 had reigned over the French, they would have used him no better than they did Louis 16.

I must acknowledge I should have been for Cavendish and Stanley against Curteis and Horrocks ; but everything must have a beginning. It is pleasant to see with what secret disdain Lord Burghley—a new man, originally a Curteis or Horrocks—speaks of birth ; which, he says, " is nothing but ancient riches,"—and then to consider how we think of the Cecils, and they of themselves. And Cavendish and Cecil are much on a par. Not so Stanley, I grant ; your York and Lancaster families might have told Lord Burghley that birth was ancient valour, and he might have replied something about savages and tyrants. So it is best to waive all these controversies. This reminds me of *Ivanhoe* I take the introduction of Scripture

phrases to be neither intentional profaneness in the author nor carelessness, but adherence to the strict letter of the time he describes. It was their constant language. They had few books to read, and they quoted *à tort et à travers* the one they knew, just as in the 17th century they did the Classics. Even Jeremy Taylor cannot bid us do as we would be done by without bringing in a passage from Plato or Homer. And *vice versâ* the monks could not order their dinner without Scripture authority. The reading scarcely anything else had the same effect on the Puritans.

I have not read the Edinburgh Magazine you mention, but if it attacks Walter Scott (or whoever it may be) for a design to ridicule the priesthood, it is as unjust as if they said the Templar and De Bracey were intended to render the character of a soldier odious.

I shall not enclose this to the member for Newark, because just at present the greatest favour one can do the member for Armagh is to employ him in franking a letter—it is a pleasure correspondent to that with which a boy puts on his first regimentals. But he must learn to mind other business than franking if he has a mind to stay in Parliament, and I heartily wish he may. Meanwhile his constituents were so pleased that they sent the Primate word it need not be called a close borough, for there was not a man in it unwilling to elect his son. This is because the father does do their business; though, if the son neglects it, they may change their minds.

And laziness is terribly the order of the day with young gentlemen, although, to be candid, I do not think them as fond of mischief as the same class were forty years ago. I did mean to have said more on various subjects, but I somehow am not in tune for writing to-day, and must conclude. By your not mentioning Lady Louisa's health I trust it is at least not worse than usual. Remember [me] most kindly to her, and believe me ever afftely. yours,

L. S.

Pray never scruple writing.

DANESFIELD, *Monday, 8th Oct. [1821].*

MY DEAR LOU,—To do things in order let me thank you for two letters duly received, one dated Chester, Sept. 28th, the other from Alderley which came yesterday morning. The former discomposed me, trenching upon all the old forbidden ground. Even Madame de Sévigné's reiterated encomiums on her daughter, and extreme professions of fondness, have in some degree this effect. And you may depend upon it, dear Lou, that exaggerated praise of any person, nay, of anything, is sure to leave on the mind of every hearer an impression rather unfavourable to that person or thing. One's own reason tells one there is something to be deducted, and not knowing precisely what, one is tempted to deduct rather too much than too little. The moment Pope had said—

“He dedicates in high heroic prose,”

the next line “And ridicules beyond a hundred

foes" made itself: the consequence was as certain as "*I fell*" after "*he knocked me down.*" This is a scold, I grant, and so intended. Pray let it work a reformation, but now I have done.

I never saw the Ladies of Llangollen, but for these forty years past have heard so much of them and seen so many of their letters, that I think I can give a peremptory answer to your gentle, hesitating question, and be quite confident that had Bishop Pelham and his lady visited them the day after Lady Maria, it would have been "the dear king" at every word—"well, after all, I fancy there is nobody so charming"—"for my part I was always in love with him"—"one does feel glad he has got rid of that horrid woman," etc. etc. etc. They are the very grossest flatterers and palaverers upon earth, and keeping, as poor Edward Hamilton used to say, a "*gossip shop*" between England and Ireland, have contrived to learn the characters and private history, the foibles and predilections, of almost every individual above a cobbler in both, therefore know exactly in what key they should play to every fresh visitor. In the year of our Lord 1782, when I first heard of them, I was disposed to be captivated with anything so romantic. I came to my senses on being assured in course of time that there was nothing the least romantic about them, and that nobody knew the world so well, or was so desirous to keep up a close connection with it. By the bye, take this for a maxim ever while you live. No character becomes so

thoroughly worldly as one that sets out with being romantic, and can entirely overcome the propensity ; all the enthusiasm having (pretty surely) belonged to the head, which clears, grows wiser, and ends as cool and calculating as head can be. In men this process often makes the most hardened kind of libertine. In women, only those who can coax, and wind, and manage other people most cleverly, and play their own cards to the best advantage : for having once had something like fine feelings, they are able to work themselves up to them again on proper occasions with amazing effect, and talk sentiment to admiration, where sentiment is the current coin.

Wednesday.—You may think me severe on these poor ladies, but if I were to count up to you the persons of my acquaintance who have at several times visited them, and been each the very individual they had all their lives particularly longed to see, and for whose favourite relation, or friend, or patron, or *chef de parti*, they had ever had the most peculiar partiality, or admiration, or veneration (as the word chanced to suit), you would not wonder. Poor I myself have been in three or four instances the object of their distant passion. In one I was comically coupled with a brother of their visitor, who assured me that the two people on earth they had most set their hearts on seeing were myself and his said brother—only remarkable for having been once the greatest coxcomb, and always the greatest profligate in England, but esteemed by

everybody (even his own family), as shallow as he was worthless and impertinent. I am afraid you would have found me less complaisant than Aunt S., for all the beauties of the valley would not pay me for being forced to spend a day with them. I was yesterday complimented as very tolerant; but I cannot be so to the Genus Mountebankum, and they clearly belong to it. Poor Mrs. P. [Preston] used to cry Faugh! when they were named.

I shall not scold you for your sensations on the Capelcurig road. I know full well that there are people who act as an extinguisher to those of your temper and mine in such given cases. Our *kettle-drum*, for example, who went away yesterday morning, and at whom you do not give a right guess, though a droll one, because I believe she and the person you mean hate each other. The latter I left at Petersham, where (as I hinted) Mrs. D. [Douglas] seemed to think the noise overpowered Lady Charlotte. Ours you do not know. She is a matron, and having been used to domineer through life, delivers opinions without appeal, in the voice of a pea-hen, is supreme judge of everything and everybody all over Europe, goes and tells ministers at home and ambassadors abroad what they ought to attend to, being determined they shall not pretend ignorance; "but," says she (probably with great truth), "though I explained it all to him (say Lord Londonderry or Sir Charles Stuart) my own self, he only fell a-laughing—in

short, they never will mind anything they ought to do." She was extremely wroth with the Duke of Wellington some years ago for the removal of the statues, etc., from Paris, so went *her own self* and asked a private audience of Louis XVIII, to assure him that she and the better sort of English highly disapproved of what was done, for she "was resolved he should know the real truth." Like all of the vehement class, she sometimes veers about, and poor fat Louis is now altogether out of favour, as well as George IV. Then for everybody's private history, it has somehow or other come to her own certain knowledge—"Such a one! Lord bless you! why, he lived in our house, he was like my own son or my own brother,—*you* might hear what nonsense you pleased on the subject, but I tell you I knew every circumstance about it, as well as they did themselves—for that matter, perhaps better." Add to this an unceasing *clack* such as makes one say to a child, your tongue must be glad when you are asleep: but often a good deal of humour; and for my part I am only too thankful to anybody who makes me laugh, which she has done so often that I am in perfect charity with her, after passing a fortnight under the same roof—to be sure the house does now seem so still and quiet! To return to the Welsh mountains, I should be sorry to view them, or the Swiss, shut up in a post-chaise with her, and I have a notion that ——— fill up the blank I dare not. On these occasions, however, one does especially want a

companion of a taste and disposition not totally foreign to one's own, for it is unpleasant to stifle every feeling and repress every word that would distinguish one's admiration of Snowdon and Helvellyn from the praise due to a service of Sèvres china—"Charmingly pretty indeed!"

I am afraid the *Sapphire story* is much too true. As for the harm of the connection, there is a great deal of harm according to an old Scotch woman, who, when people talked before her of drinking as a mischievous vice, gaming as a worse, etc., exclaimed, "None of you have named the most mischievous of all—it is Folly": but I am one of those who suspect there is no other harm; *suspect*, I say; no thanks to *them*, for they are evidently desirous the contrary should be believed, and both highly vain of the appearance, which is quite as unprincipled as if they went every length. Don't be scandalized when I say I wish it were on the regular Montespan footing, for then it would be outwardly decorous and dignified, which is all *we* have to do with. Louis 14 certainly never fell into the error Mrs. Millamant cautioned her intended husband against in a clever wicked old play¹ that you never read: "Good Mirabel, do not let us be familiar and fond before folks, like my Lady Faddle and Sir Francis." Whereas now it is my Lady Faddle and Sir Francis in Westminster Abbey and St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Thursday.—This goes on driblet by driblet,

¹ Congreve's *The Way of the World*.

sadly disjointed, but I have not much time for writing. I enter fully into your feelings on taking leave of Granny by letter. The loss she will be to you is the circumstance that hurts one most in the business, for I fear you will feel it every day, both at Cl. [Clinton] Lodge and in London. It is a loss to me likewise of society very congenial to me, but I have nothing else to expect than losing all which is so, sooner or later, and when I leave this place have no prospect before me of almost ever enjoying the real country again, unless I should give up London entirely, and settle somewhere at a great distance, a change I cannot resolve upon. I go from hence on Monday to Petersham for a few days. *They* begin their journey to Scotland on the 27th. Alas ! alas ! to that Bothwell which they left with regret in March 1817, looking forward to their return as what would be joy and delight. And what is it now ?—it makes me almost feel as if I were going there myself—but the effort is become due to her father and sister, and I am glad she has at last resolved on making it, though I fear she will never be able to command her feelings on first sight of those walls—and to those who staid on there, and are used to every object, you know it is so different a thing. Oh ! the other night I dreamt I was to take that journey as I used to do, and that nothing had happened to hinder me—a sort of suspicion made me ask myself, “ Am I asleep, am I dreaming or not ? ” and I felt perfectly sure I was awake and all was real. Oh ! the slow and bitter

consciousness of reality that returns after such dreams ! But I have written myself into a fit of crying, so must have done.

I know nothing of Mr. Morritt, Mr. Wharton, nor (lately) of Mrs. Weddell. I am going to write to the first, fearing his long silence bodes no good. I wish you and myself joy of the announced "*Pirate* by the author of *Waverley*." Mrs. Scott (here) is as thorough-paced a lover of those books as either of us. I have been looking over the Ayrshire Legatees, which I do not like at all. Mme. de Staël's *Dix Années d'Exil* is here, but a lord of the creation has got possession of it and reads so slowly that I have no chance of it while I stay.

Well, dearest Lou, farewell—till further orders write to Gloucester Place ; if I move again beyond the penny post (which I only shall in case I go to Chiselhurst) I will let you know. Believe that your letters are ever a great pleasure to me, if you will but forbear what is noticed in my first page—indeed more than a pleasure, a comfort to my solitary existence. And so God bless you ! Amen !

GLOUCESTER PLACE,
Thursday, March 7 [1822].

DEAR LOUISA,—A thousand thanks for Granny's letter, which I read with great satisfaction, and which came very opportunely, as I intend writing to Lady Charlotte to-morrow. I do not return it yet, because I have another inclosure to fill up the frank ; of that presently : do not open it till you

read what it is. Meanwhile I must tell you that I left Ditton on Tuesday the 26th for Chiswick, saw my nieces here the next day, and came hither to settle myself on Tuesday, the 5th of March. Finding the Fanshawes ticket four times over, I resolved they should be among the first people I called upon. Miss F. was at home, and pressed me much to come in the evening : she expected Miss Edgeworth—I resisted that—Mr. and Mrs. Stanley were to dine with her, then I gave way, recollecting that my sister L., to whom I was going, shuts up at ten o'clock. So I have made acquaintance with them both (with Miss E. and Mrs. S. I mean), and your favourite's outside is certainly one of the most pleasing and attractive I ever saw. I believe I was a little like a shy child who, because it feels awkward, becomes noisy and impudent. Knowing that an old woman's shyness, as it cannot be comprehended, is repulsive and inspires fear, I resolved not to be shy ; but the reverse sits ill upon me, and perhaps I went too far the other way. However, with a lioness to see and hear, and a lioness who has much to say, you may suppose nothing more than the ice could be broken, and "*eternal friendship sworn*" in a summary manner. I told her when I was likely to be at home in the morning, and offered to receive her in an evening if she pleased. Are you contented ?

Now for what I inclose ; I hit upon it yesterday in rummaging two or three old pocket-books for a receipt, and it carried me back six or seven and forty

years. I recollected it well though, and called to mind that Lady Emily Macleod and I in our girlish days had once a mania for writing portraits, our own, each others, and the Miss That's and This's who came in our way. Ianthe¹ was a certain person whose early character I happened to treat of in my last. Lady Emily's portrait, by name of Augusta, was on the same sheet of paper, but as that could not interest you, I have torn it off. You must return me this. I should suppose I was about seventeen at the time, by the hand, which was striving to be an Italian one, and as you will perceive no way formed. And I do believe the portrait was just, tho' I daresay you will think it otherwise. Self-conceit and vanity are incurable where they are undiscovered, but whoever has an early consciousness of their being there, has a something in his or her mind which will sooner or later work them off. The partiality for a country never seen (S——d) [Scotland] will make you stare, as certainly it by no means exists now ; but it was then connected with Ossian and Wallace, and I know not how much nonsense. The pride of birth has also long since found its level. Some parts are so worn out as to be hardly legible, the words understroked are "*a learned lady.*" Nothing, however, will surprise you so much as a point not touched upon here. In those days and many subsequent, it was my firm opinion that Ianthe had very little feeling, was remarkably deficient in what

¹ *i.e.* herself. See *ante*, p. 26.

is called sensibility. She never cried at a tragedy or over a novel. I have learned better now, and from what I remember am ready to say honestly that her feelings lay too deep and were too powerful to be easily called into action. I used also to think it a crime in her that she was not in her heart attached to such and such persons, "*commissioned*," as the poet says, "by such and such *names*." Now I know she was formed to love to the utmost, but only a few, and likewise that it was hardly possible she could love those in question, any more than you can Mrs. H—— "*commissioned by the name of aunt*." Where there is a great difference of age in the same family, so that one is out of *la maison paternelle* before the other comes into it, the name is still *frère* and *sœur*, but how can it enforce the feeling? George may feel for you as a *sort* of sister, but how is it possible he should for Lady Maria S.?

Have you read the *Martyr of Antioch*?¹ I read it (aloud) at Ditton, and did not like it much—heavy and dragging, I think. Poor Eliz. Fanshawe seems very indifferent indeed.

[*Rest of letter destroyed.*]

RICHMOND (Duchess of Buccleuch's),
Jan'y. 20th [1823].

Though it is a bad reason for silence, yet I am willing to suppose you forbear writing because you want a frank, rather than to think anything ails

¹ Poem by Dean Milman.

Clinton Lodge and its inmates. If I guess right, pray let me pay for a long letter forthwith ; I assure you I can afford it. I have been here a fortnight, and shall stay a week longer, then, I hope, settle in town. The Fanshawes were gone before I came, and had let their house to the Miss Vyners. Lizette Scott continues to please her uncle and aunt as much as ever, but I fear is delicate, though perhaps not absolutely unhealthy. I will tell you an anecdote respecting them to give you a full insight into the mysteries of gossiping, especially country-town gossiping, of which I observe you have only a faint idea. A Lady Hobhouse who lives somewhere near Twickenham gave a fancy ball. They did not know her and had nothing to do with it, but a few people who were dining with them that day came in their fancy dresses : this produced mirth. After dinner Mrs. Scott and Lizette put on whatever rags they could find, Capt. Scott a shawl and a petticoat, and a Miss Webb, one of their company, his cocked hat and boat-cloak. *Lie the first* on this foundation—"Miss Webb went to Lady Hobhouse's ball *in men's clothes* (instead of home to bed), which induced two or three young men to treat her with such impertinent freedom, that Mr. Such-a-one interposed to protect her, and very high words passed on both sides"—there ought to have been a duel and "a bullet in the thorax"—these may be added in the second edition. Lizette was so delighted, that the Hobhouse-goers offered to come again and bring some of their friends on such a

day to the number of about twenty, and a gentleman who is fond of acting whispered that he would arrive as a French governess and dare his acquaintance to find him out. *Lie the second*—current far and wide in four-and-twenty hours—Mrs. Scott was to give a grand masquerade, the cards were all out and the *non-invitees* extremely angry. I found her in a fuss writing notes to beg everybody would come in their usual dresses. I told her she would get nothing by that, and accordingly then the report was that Mrs. Scott had *put off* her masquerade. And a ball she *is* to give still, say what she pleases—people have it from good authority. At another time such stuff would not have signified, but Capt. Scott being in mourning for his brother, Lizette for her father, and the family here for a grandson, there was a vexatious corner in it, as there was to poor Miss Webb in *lie the first*. For among gossips something always sticks, nobody has leisure to investigate pros and cons ; so seven years hence one will say to the other, “ That is the woman who went in breeches to a ball,” and the fact will be held indisputable.

Thursday.—I have very little leisure for writing here, and every letter I begin dawdles on as you see. Poor Ly. Home remains all this while at Ditton, and by what Lady Montagu writes, bears her affliction [the death of a son] with such meekness and resignation, and is so willing to open her mind to comfort, that it makes one the more sorry for her. . . . I have often thought over what quizzing,

now a word adopted into our language, really was. When a new one, it was explained by a lawyer in West^r. Hall, into which came the cause of some school boys, who, from quizzing a man they did not like, proceeded to beating and stoning him. His counsel said Quiz was a contraction of *queer phiz*, and I think the spirit of the thing has kept closer to its original than is usual, showing its wide distinction from ridicule. Ridicule may be unjust, malignant, ill-timed, but it is not childish. You ridicule a person for some quality you impute to them, at least and lowest for some odd habit of speaking or moving or looking, at the very worst for a personal defect. You quiz them for an old-fashioned waistcoat if you yourself happen to be young ; for a new-fashioned one if you are old. You laugh in the first case, you are sour and snarl in the second, but you still *quiz* ; the principle is all one, and something you are not daily used to see (be it right or wrong) is the sole object. The most even, common, character on earth, or the most superior, may have something in house, carriage, servants, *quizzable* ; their name may be so, or it may be one rendered so by transposing the letters or playing on the word, and then there is an end of them, they become a good joke for ever and aye. You have heard of Mr. Tytler, author of *Elements of History*. Becoming a Lord of Session, he took the title of his place, Lord Woodhouselee, which luckily had not anything inharmonious or barbarous in it, like those of many of his brethren on

the bench ; it was noted too in Scotch history and venerable as "*haunted Woodhouselee*" : but it occurred to somebody that it might be made into *Wood-louse-he* : thenceforward he was Lord Wood-lousehe, poor Mrs. Tytler, Lady *Wood-louse-she*, and the daughters the *Woodlice-they*. You will say it did them no harm. No more it did, and they might have laughed at it themselves. Yet I saw plainly that in the set where these names were established, tho' they did not know one of the family by sight, if you had presumed to speak of any of them as estimable or agreeable, a general shout would have been set up—" Oh ho ! you like *Woodlice-they*, do you ? Oh, I daresay they are delightful. Oh yes, no doubt they have all the merit in the world—ha ha ha ! ho ho ho ! " I knew none of them myself, so judged quite impartially, and it was one of the things that led me most to ponder the merits and effects of *quizzing*. A book may be quizzed out of the field as well as a person, not for anything in it, but for something such a one who never read it thought fit to suppose of it, or to say of its title-page, and then you are a quiz if you read it. You are used to my dissertations, and will forgive this. It is a sign I have not much to say. As for reading, I have much to say of the *Mémoires de l'Europe sous Napoléon*, but not time for it till quiet in my own house. I piously believe them genuine ; they have the *sceau* of his genius and of his profound art. I am also reading *Journal de Las Cases*. I shut one book where he

himself details the precautions taken to secure personal liberty under his government, the strict laws for the purpose, no person could be kept in prison a day without so, and so, and so, judges, privy council, and I know not what. I opened the other where Las Cases says that on looking over papers at St. Helena, the Emperor was himself surprised to see the number of books prohibited and of *persons arrested by the police*, whom he had never heard of and knew nothing about; as was unavoidable, his time and attention being so much engrossed. This not the only cat let out of the bag. Pray, if you love laughing, read “the *Entail*, or the *Lairds of Grippy*.” It is admirable for that purpose, tho’ far more broadly Scotch than I can understand; but besides the patois, the old lady has a slip-slop of her own quite incomparable—*concos montes* for *compos mentis*, etc.—and the author [Galt] this time is so wise as to keep quite out of good company, avoid lords and ladies, and only describe the people he has seen. I verily think poor Lord Portsmouth must have suggested the idea of Watty. We have begun *Peeveril*, but not gone far in it. It is read aloud, and, *entre nous*, ill read, and I can yet form no judgement, only I am indignant at the liberties taken with so fine a character as the Countess of Derby, who was a heroine, but no virago, and whom the Restoration found in poverty and imprisonment. Fie upon him! he must be turned Whig with a witness. Adieu! I go to town (I hope, to stay) on Monday next, and

shall really be very glad to find a letter from you. My sisters seem to stand this severe weather wonderfully well. I will write again before long.

To Sir Walter Scott

GLOUCESTER PLACE, 29 June 1824.

DEAR SIR WALTER,—I ought to have thanked you for *Redgauntlet* a fortnight ago, but I stayed to read it, and then to read it again. It has taken my fancy very particularly, though (not to flatter you) I could almost wonder why : for there is no story in it, no love, no hero—unless Redgauntlet himself, who would be such a one as the Devil in Milton ; yet in spite of all these wants, the interest is so strong one cannot lay it down, and I prophesy for it a great deal of mauling and abuse, and a second edition before the maulers know where they are. I do not pretend, however, to relish your Grim-gribber of Scotch law ; those may who understand it.

The Pretender's imperious mistress conjured up a thousand recollections of her sister, good Mrs. Catherine Walkinshaw, the Princess Dowager's bedchamber woman—in my younger days the most eminent managing gossip in London, always busy about somebody's affairs, the adviser of every Scotch family, the protectress of every raw young Scotchman, the confidante and assistant of all match-making mammas, Scotch or English. I have the portly figure before me with her long lace ruffles,

her gold snuff-box, and her double chin. My eldest brother, who knew the sister at Paris, where she resided with her daughter in a convent, described her as a complete Frenchwoman, retaining no mark of her own country ; but Catherine was a genuine old wife. My father would have made her old with a witness, for he maintained he first came up from Scotland seated on her lap. The woman really not being many years older than he, the fact was disputed with him as impossible, and probably related to some other person. Surely there are varieties of the human species that die away and are lost, like golden pippins and clove gillyflowers. The Catherine Walkinshaw clan seems extinct, at least I know no such general undertakers at present. And perhaps the world does just as well without them.

You will rejoice and that heartily, to hear of Mr. Morritt's return home, in better hopes and spirits than could have been expected. . . .

Your comfortable long letter was not thrown away, I assure you ; it made amends for the long silence preceding it, which however required no apology. I am always delighted to hear from you, but take it as a godsend when I can get it without claiming it as a right, because I know you have something else to do in every hour of the four-and-twenty, independent of writing Redgauntlets and Sieges of Ptolemais. What you say of poor Dalkeith would be a shining passage in a work of fiction, exactly from being so just and true. I do not like

even to think of that gallery cold and silent. I shall never see it again ; you will, probably, and see it filled with a new race of beings much excelling the old, as your sons will tell you. You wonder Lord Castlereagh was placed at Edinburgh. I have a notion he made rather a forced *exit* from Oxford, found the gates of Cambridge barred, and resorted to our university as a *pis aller*. I do not listen to tattle much, and usually lame a story, but there was some *esclandre* or other, and he a party concerned in it, which sent him to sow the remainder of his wild oats in North Britain : no great advantage to the natives by the bye, tho' the young man may turn out very well in the end.

I believe you will have the Montagus in Scotland ere long. My friend Miss Murray, who has been staying with me (off and on) for some months, talks of going next week in the steam-packet. I shall be a sad lonely being without her. I read her the legend of Steenie Steenson the other night, and we agreed that it was in the author's very best manner. I felt disappointed, though, at Wandering Willie's not coming forward more effectually after that very interesting scene of using old times as a sort of telegraph. I thought he was to be a prime agent, and then I heard no more of him ; that is to say, the aforesaid author grew tired and flung the cards into the bag as fast as he could. I know his provoking ways. But once more, when shall we have the Crusader ?

Next to demanding a letter from you, the most

audacious thing is to plague you with a very long one, and I am afraid four pages may be so termed when they contain little worth saying. But beyond the four I will not go. Remember me kindly to Lady Scott and Mrs. Lockhart; and ever believe me your friend with the sincerest regard.

L. STUART.

To Sir Walter Scott

DITTON PARK, 11th March 1826.

MY DEAR SIR WALTER,—Your welcome letter, together with the particulars Lord Montagu gave me, partly dispelled the anxiety that had prompted me to write in a manner which perhaps it was very kind in you not to take ill; for report, according to custom, magnified the evil twentyfold, and I dreamed of nothing less than utter ruin and desolation. Mr. Morritt, who at first did so too, vows this shall cure him of ever believing half what the world says, which before he thought a good safe proportion. Still, the truth, such as it is, would be overwhelming to most minds; and were I to tell you how your calm fortitude affected me, and how often I read over with admiration the little you say on the subject, I should be afraid of your thinking I dealt in the figure of speech called palaver. But there is something that makes one's heart glow when one meets with a character, even in books,

“that is not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please”—

and the effect may well be stronger where one knows and values the person. I do own that if I had not checked myself I should have returned fire and expressed all I felt directly. However, by delaying I can speak on a theme you will like better, and give you a late account of Mrs. Lockhart, who has been here for two days of this week. I saw her in town just before I left it (a month ago); her looks are mended since then, and though her situation is pretty apparent, she did not seem the worse for a whole morning spent in viewing Windsor Castle within and without, old part and new—the most fatiguing thing in the world. At night she sung us two or three of her wild songs, and I wish you had seen the eager eyes of some of the younger listeners, to whom she was a huge lion as your daughter, and who had been sucking in whatever she said of you. I find her the same Sophia she ever was, as natural and as engaging; and her husband just what you described him, a Spanish nobleman, or suppose we say the Master of Ravenswood, with a face for painters to study, but a brow rather awful notwithstanding its beauty. It was a delight to me to renew acquaintance with her; twelve hours in a country house, you know, do more than eight-and-forty morning visits in London, therefore I looked forward to her coming as my best opportunity; and she was so glad to breathe some fresh air and meet her old friends Lady Anne (Scott) and Lady Isabella (Cust) that I believe she enjoyed her visit as much as we did her company, although pulled

back by her poor little boy. He seems a fine lively spirited child. I am sorry his constitution is so delicate.

I do not know what may be the case with *Woodstock*, but I am sure Malachi Malagrowth *ne ressent pas de l'apoplexie*. Who would have expected amusement from anything any human being could write upon banknotes and currencies? So I rest perfectly satisfied that the master-spring remains unbroken, 'though I feel a cowardly dread of the nest of hornets Malachi is drawing about his ears; some might to sting, however unequal to answer.

I write this before I go away, which I shall do early in next week, having made them here a visitation. They are to be in town themselves after Easter. With kind remembrance to Lady Scott, believe me, most truly yours, L. STUART.

To Sir Walter Scott

GLOUCESTER PLACE, 24th April 1826.

Your letters are always so acceptable, dear Sir Walter, that I wish it were not painful to you to write. Yet since it is, I would fain have it a thing understood that you need not answer mine, especially as I daresay I am not the only foolish woman who plagues you in this way. I trust your mind has been partly relieved since you wrote by Mrs. Lockhart's safe confinement, which I was most heartily glad to hear of. For the poor little boy, it must be as Providence wills, and at best I fear a

source of long and wearing anxiety ; but sometimes children such as you describe him live and do well at last. I am sure one might have used your very words—" something lent to us from another world "—about Lady Harriet Scott, who is now as likely to live as any of her family, and rather less liable to illness than some of the rest. It gives me still more concern that you should have cause for uneasiness on account of Lady Scott's health. May God restore it and preserve her to you ! How well I understand the indifference you feel about mere worldly matters when objects so dear are in any kind of jeopardy ; then the probe reaches the quick, and all before goes for nothing. Still, I must rejoice these secondary things go so well, the more from its being a proof that the public mind is not changed nor the public appetite cloyed. Another thing pleases me, the general approbation of the last *Quarterly Review*, Mr. Lockhart's first, I believe, and one in which your cloven foot is visible. It had something to set it off, however ; for I think verily the temporary editor of the work during the *interregnum* must have been bribed into his extreme degree of dullness. By the bye I have lately had a long bad cold, such as reduces one to trash and slops, novels and barley-water, and amongst the books my friends kindly sent me to while away time was the first volume of one puffed in the newspaper, *The Last Man*, by the authoress of *Frankenstein*. I would not trouble them for any more of it, but really there were sentences in it so far exceeding

those Don Quixote ran mad in trying to comprehend, that I could not help copying out a few of them ; they would have turned Feliciano de Silva's own brains. For example :—

“ Her eyes were impenetrably deep ; you seemed to discover space after space in their intellectual glance, and to feel that the soul which was their soul comprehended an universe of thought in its ken.”

And this : “ The overflowing warmth of her heart, by making love a plant of deep root and stately growth, had attuned her whole soul to the reception of happiness.”

I amused myself with turning the metaphor to matter of fact. The overflowing warmth of the stove, by making the geranium strike root and grow vigorous, tuned the pianoforte to the reception of God save the King. Since the wonderful improvement that somebody who shall be nameless, together with Miss Edgeworth and one or two more, have made in novels, I imagined such stuff as this had not ventured to show its head, though I remember plenty of it in the days of my youth. So for old acquaintance-sake I give it welcome. But if the boys and girls begin afresh to take it for sublime and beautiful, it ought to get a rap and be put down.

The Montagus settle in town the end of this week for the remainder of the season, which the expected dissolution of Parliament is likely to abridge, therefore I wish they had come sooner. Poor Sir Alexander Don's death is a sad shock to them. I have not heard anything lately of Scott of Gala,

but think his uncle, the admiral, was to visit him or be visited by him a week or two ago. I am going to stay a few days with the Scotts at Petersham previous to their setting out for Bothwell early in May, and if I can pick up any tidings of the nephew more satisfactory than what you seem to have had, I will send them you on my return, provided that if I do you are not even to say thank ye. I can easily conceive the blank his absence must cause in your neighbourhood. But alas that you, who as Canton says in the play¹ “are chicken to me,” should already talk of the world gliding from beneath you! Certainly it must be one day, but indeed ’tis *o’er soon*, and I hope there will come brighter moments tempting you to retract the hasty word. God bless you! Dear Sir Walter, I say it from my heart.

I was going to conclude, and forgetting to mention Mr. Morritt, whose domestic happiness remains unabated. He trundles his whole cargo of nephew and nieces down to Rokeby on the fifteenth of May, and if all should go well, builds upon the hope of luring you to come so far in summer. Now farewell. Believe me, always affectionately yours,

L. STUART.

Tuesday.

P.S.—Since I wrote the above I have called in Pall Mall, and Mr. Lockhart, who was at home, sent word that all was going on well at Brighton.

¹ Coleman’s *Clandestine Marriage*.

To Miss Louisa Clinton

DANESFIELD, *Wednesday*, [August 1826].

I will be yet better than my word, and not let another post pass without returning Mrs. Stanley's letter, and writing a few lines in answer to the two I have had from you ; I like the second best, not because you say more of yourself in the first, but because you only say what you have said times innumerable before, what I am tired of combating and more tired of hearing. It is a fickle taste, I own, but one does relish novelty now and then if one can get it ; so I am glad to hear of Bella's match and Frederick's travels. Frederick's interest in Waterloo will, of course, make him more your favourite than ever, and I cannot but hope that Henry will be induced to join him in Italy. Now let me congratulate you upon your own room—it put me so in mind of my own closet at Luton, a space of about eight feet by four, which just held a chair and a table, and had some shelves that held my few books. “I was bounded in a nut-shell and counted myself a queen of infinite space” ; but there I could build my castles and scrawl paper alone, being then about your sister Harriet's age. “Every one knows his own sore,” says the proverb, and I, with all *your* tastes, knew the evil of being the *youngest* among brothers and sisters, of being daily snubbed and checked “*for all my nonsense*,” and told by elders, of whom I stood in awe, of my self-conceit and affectation of wisdom, in reading

books I had no sort of business with instead of minding my work as I should do, with this constant burthen, "I know as well as possible you have got it in your head that you are to be like my grandmother," whereas it was this reproach that first informed me I had ever had a grandmother, and I am sure I heartily hated her name. Whatever I wanted to learn, everybody was up in arms to oppose it, and represent that if I indulged in it I should become such a pedant nobody would be able to bear me. My temper, alas! was not improved by this discipline, nor yet my humility increased, for in my secret heart I involuntarily argued something like the nun who said to Madame de Maintenon: "*La peine que prend une dame de votre élévation de venir exprès me dire que je ne suis pas fille du Roi me persuade que je la suis.*"

But some of its effects have stuck faithfully by me to this late, *very* late hour,—the want of power to bear any part in general conversation, arising from the habit of dreading the ridicule which usually followed whenever I opened my lips; and a constant apprehension of being despised by *men* (which is just the way to make one so), from having had it dinned into my ears that if they suspected my pursuits and inclinations they would spit in my face. And you wish you were a younger sister! I believe you would find your own room a still pleasanter retreat in that case, and if you had ever had your book snatched out of your hand, and been told, "If *I* were my mother you should never be

allowed to read anything but the Bible on a Sunday," I suspect you would think it rather a less hardship to find you could not inspire young girls who have a very natural desire of amusement with a taste for study. One of the consequences of withdrawing wholly from the world is the becoming so wedded to our own opinions that we can endure only one sort of merit and agreeableness. Some of those I have loved best had no sort of taste or turn for books or literature, no more than your sisters ; nor yet the smallest liking for any talent or acquirement that *you* admire in me ; but they let me go my own way as they went theirs, and our friendship was not the less sincere. This saved me from being a coxcomb. I learned perforce not to over-estimate goods that I often found unsaleable. "Those at *the age* of admiration and enthusiasm." As if everybody *ought* to be enthusiastic and admiring at that age, while in the natural course of things very few have any such feelings in their composition, and the consequence of your persuading those who have not, that it was necessary or even becoming, would be to make them abominably affected. Are not Maria and Anny a thousand times preferable to the Miss in *Inheritance*, who describes the Lakes of Cumberland ? I own if I were you I should, as far as was in my power, withdraw from the task of teaching what they have no desire to learn. Let them alone, and then if ever the desire comes (which many circumstances may awaken in future) they will apply to you. But

do not make yourself a governess ; it evidently does no good, and it does you harm, for it sours your temper and produces discontent. Harriet loves animals, read with her the history of birds and beasts and insects instead of that of the Greeks and Romans, draw her to such books as White's *Natural History of Selborne*, but do not bother and (though I hate the word) *bore* her with what she has no relish for. I think of leaving this place early in next week, but have not yet fixed any day, nor any other circumstance, so I cannot tell whether I shall offer myself to Cockenhatch soon or not till late in September. I only know I heartily wish you *had* gone to Alderley. Adieu, with all that is kind to Lady Louisa.

RICHMOND, 5th December 1826.

MY DEAR LOUISA,—I left Petersham last Thursday first receiving your letter. . . .

I can tell you no more of the affairs that interest me, save that Lady S. [Stuart] wrote me word from Wimpole *he* was most graciously and kindly received by the second (or twenty-second) person at the two public interviews, and she hears all sorts of kind things are said of him in that quarter, but still there is no intimation of any desire to see him in private ; so one must conclude a step so rebellious towards the supreme person will not now be taken. I know he himself thinks nothing will be done, but all quietly let down and hushed up, and the vague rumour that *he* failed and did something wrong (not exactly explained) allowed to subsist. A

direct charge could be easily and briefly repelled ; there is no such power of defeating those convenient phrases, " something or other that happened somewhere or other." And as the newspapers on both sides have maintained too profound a silence not to have been *paid for*, people in general know nothing whatever of the matter. L^y E. [Elizabeth Stuart] herself has been asked, " Where is it he was ? in Mexico ? " No. " Oh, Peru, was it ? And what did he go to do ? " I own I should like to have it fairly laid before the public—*via press*—*Mais je suis femme*. In my own opinion he would fare the better for declaring open war. He may be employed again, but if he is, the same thing will happen again. C. will make *use* of him, as he has done in this instance, and contrive to throw a veil over the merit of anything he may do—to counteract and thwart him, and then catch at some pretence to be angry. I will some day tell you the cream and finishing of the whole, at which my heart is hot within me, but I do not choose to write it. Yes, I *am* spiteful, and I hate to be so ; I hate to feel the paltry little *woman* in my composition. My mind was early formed (or half formed) by the old exploded *Spectator*, and Addison's assertion that he had seen " A woman's face break out into heats as she was railing against a great man she never saw in her life " hindered my ever being a female politician, even when I became an old maid, though the two characters are as congenial as those of barber and newsmonger. I shall like to know

what your father says to the anecdotes I sent you ; but perhaps he will give no opinion, very justly considering that they form but one side of the question. In some cases it is a misfortune to be wiser than one's own self, and know very well when one is foolish, which is my predicament on this head. Yet that he has been abominably ill-used nobody but the other's blind adherents or supple toadies can deny. Here is your letter of the 4th just come in. . . . As for the whole tribe of the Miftys old and young, what can one do but laugh at it? . . . Don't be provoked—think the wind is blowing and hum a tune tol-de-rol-loll. Adieu for the present. I forgot to tell you Lady Montagu longs to whip you for having any doubts or hesitations.

To Mrs. Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth

RICHMOND, Dec. 15, 1826.

. . . The true use of a public school is that free intercourse between a boy and his schoolfellows which equalises all ranks and fortunes, and teaches him, if one may say so, the charities of life, by making him feel that *what he is* signifies more than *who he is*—a sort of republican discipline, rough, but most wholesome and useful to the mind. At the same time a tutor is requisite in order to attend to the many things not taught at school. As for your fears of *quizzing*, much must depend on the character of the tutor, and also upon his proficiency in classical learning, which we all know Scotchmen

of even liberal education are not held to excel in. A boy who comes to Eton at twelve or thirteen years old, unless thoroughly grounded in Latin grammar, will be placed in a class with much younger boys, and very little attended to, besides being mortified to find himself there, and having no suitable companions: so that unless your *dominie* be strong in that particular, Lord Montagu advises, as almost the prime step to be taken, engaging a school tutor also—meaning, I presume, that the boys should be placed under the immediate superintendence of one of the ushers or undermasters. Lord M. told me a story with which I must treat Mr. S. M. and you, for I know you will enjoy it—in a comedy it would be called *outré*. Macdonnell of Glengarry came with a great staring lad of fourteen to enter him at Eton. The poor boy, almost of a man's size, being lamentably deficient in grammar and prosody, and pronouncing Latin *à l'Écossaise*, was placed in the third form with children of ten years old. Meanwhile the father desired to speak with Dr. Keate himself, who left his dinner to receive the Laird's commands. These were to observe a point of great importance, viz. that his son should be entered in the books Macdonnell, and not Macdonald. "Sir," said he, "Macdonnell was the true ancient name from time immemorial: it has always been Macdonnell till the invasion of the Romans; then they corrupted it into *Macdonaldus*, but we have nothing to do with the Latin termination." The little

Doctor did nothing but bow and assent to the formidable chieftain, but in repeating it said, "I could have told him, if I durst, that *Macdonellus* was much better Latin than *Macdonaldus*, and exculpated the Romans altogether."

To Miss Louisa Clinton

RICHMOND, Tuesday, Decr. 26th [1826].

You have been disappointed, I fear, at my not writing, but I did not exactly understand your directions, and now have thought it best to send for a frank before I ventured it. I trust ere now the troops are arrived at Lisbon, and if the newspapers say anything like truth, the Spaniards have so far drawn in their horns, and the French so declared themselves, that no serious contest can be apprehended. Lady S. came down to the Lodge as soon as she had dispatched her grandson to Portsmouth. Her servant whom she sent with him returned with an account that he had left him safe on board the *Wellesley*, that he presented a letter from his uncle to Sir Thos. Hardy, who received him with great kindness, and said he was sorry that the crowded state of the ship would not allow him to give him a better berth than the midshipmen's quarters. Your father being but just come, and everything in hurry and confusion, the young gentleman wisely deferred troubling him with my letter till the next day. It was necessary for Sir C. [Stuart, his uncle, the ambassador] to

pernicious? You may observe nobody does say it, not the most abusive writers; they are *bigots*, and *old fools*, and men of *narrow minds* and *contracted views*, that is the key it is played in. On the other side, whom will you find able to set his face to this assertion? "Brougham, etc., are perfectly honest men, they may be wrong or too violent, but they wish only the public good." Not a single soul. Brougham himself would laugh at it, as Wilkes did at your grandfather when he asked him why he raised the nation against my father, whom he freely told him he thought "*a very good minister*."

No! honesty is never named; they are men of liberal, enlarged notions; the march of intellect and the sway of genius are rung in your ears, dazzling abilities flashed in your face, and you are bigoted or foolish if you boggle at anything they propose. At the same time such men have their use and ought always to exist, or we should gradually sink into a set of old women; but they should be opposers, not governors, and I own I dread C——'s bringing them in triumphant, notwithstanding my belief that they would shortly kick him out.

I cannot conceive what has possessed me to fall into this long political dissertation. Do tell me what more you have heard about the poor Fans. [Fanshawes]. Is it to such an extent as is rumoured? The newspapers said £19,000 or £29,000. Ten thousand make some difference, but

even the smaller sum would be tremendous. I have never opened my lips on the subject to any one, excepting to say I should be very sorry if it were true, when somebody has come open-mouthed with the story. Indeed, I detest that sort of gossip about one's neighbours' serious misfortunes—treating them as an article of news, and then off to something else, such a one's marriage or legacy, or new pair of coach horses. It always makes me savage.

Give me full instructions respecting whom I am to enclose letters to. I believe I shall stay at least ten days more here. Pray never mind franks for me, only don't cross your lines, for I would rather anybody would beat me than send me such an epistle to decypher. I hope Lady Louisa caught no cold or other mischief in returning. Now adieu.—Yrs. ever,

L. S.

D. P. [DITTON PARK],
Tuesday, February 27th [1827].

DEAR LOU,—As you desire to have the inclosed back again I will send them by return of post, *d'autant plus* as the lord and lady of the mansion are going to Richmond to-morrow to stay till Friday. Charles Douglas came on Saturday and went again yesterday. Mr. Boulton brought his old father with him on Sunday. So there were more people than usual, and I was ordered not to dine below stairs, but I did yesterday when they were all gone, and now am again one of the family.

The absent General [Pye] has continued absent in body hitherto, but is expected to bring hither his absent mind on Friday. I suppose he will not stay above a day or two. I don't know that anybody else is expected. The Courtowns are not yet set out from Ireland, and as they have run it so near (he comes for the Catholic question) very likely will go straight to town without stopping here. Do you see in the newspaper that W. S. has avowed himself the author of *Waverley*, etc.? He said at a public meeting that the secret had been remarkably well kept, considering above twenty people knew it, *one* of whom, to say truth, is now writing to you.

For these dozen years past it has been a comedy to me to hear all the arguments on the subject; the positive proofs produced that the novels were written by his brother, or his sister-in-law, or I know not whom. My incredulity with regard to common report has been greatly increased, but it has done myself some little good. I found that *knowing*, being *sure* of the fact, I was naturally inclined to be very quiet and moderate about it, never peremptory or decisive, so when I felt myself growing warm and violent on any other subject, the thought sometimes occurred: "Perhaps at this moment there is some peaceable person in a corner, of whom I am not dreaming, but to whom my positiveness is as ridiculous as such or such a one's about the *Waverley* novels. I say as little as I can on that head, only just enough not to seem mysterious; then whoever is equally certain of their

ground is likely to do as I do." I should have been equally convinced W. S. was the author, if he had *not* owned it to me very early in 1815, therefore I always professed my belief that he was, but I was open to conviction, and admitted the probability of all that others said ; and accordingly no human being suspected me, any more than they did you, of being in his secret. Lord Chesterfield says, if you tell one to a boy or a woman they betray it out of the vanity of knowing it. It is so far true, that the boy or woman whose ruling passion is vanity will be very sure to do so, not perhaps in words, but in the manner described by Hamlet—" with this head-shake," and " Well if I might—an' if I list to speak." Mystery nine times out of ten springs from vanity—it is always self-important ; therefore in general you may observe that the frankest people of your acquaintance, if of honourable characters, keep a secret the best. The easiest thing on earth is to hold one's tongue ; and if you do so many around you will attract each other's notice by making a noise that nobody will have leisure to remark whether you open your mouth or not. But then you must be satisfied to pass entirely unobserved, and that is what a great many cannot patiently endure.

Ly. Mont. [Montagu] quite agrees that Dr. Ash must be the best judge about the Fan.'s house, and I own I think, as he has given that opinion, you had better say no more about it. Here is a change of weather that will do us all good.

Sir C. S. [Charles Stuart] told me the same about Lord B., that positive orders had been sent out to him to take the command, and that if he came home he thought it must be in ignorance of it ; but this was early, for you were in my house at the moment he said it. I cannot but wish that Ursa Major may prefer staying at home. I like the order very much, and M^{de}. R.'s letter also. *Humbug* is now so universal you must not find any fault with it. *Slang* has superseded language.

My nieces are not yet in Gloucester Place, and it seems uncertain when they will be, perhaps not at all. Adieu.

[LLANOVER, Sept. 1828.]

I begin to know the names of the mountains—the Bloreng, and below it the Coed-y-Prior, or Priory-wood ; the Sugar-loaf above Abergavenny ; the Derry, a round hill beneath ; the great Skyrid, or Holy Mountain ; and the little Skyrid, a beautiful wooded hill, to the top of which we scrambled yesterday. Mrs. W. cannot walk at all. Mrs. Hall drives me out in a gig, and when we get to steep or rough ground we alight and stroll or clamber. She drives so well I am not afraid of going up and down the hills. One afternoon we went a good way in a boat along the Brecon Canal, which winds and turns so like a river that it is no unpleasing object when you happen to catch a sight of it, and the views from it are charming. The little simple churches without towers are picturesque, and almost all shaded by uncommonly

fine yews. Ironworks reign throughout the country, but then coals are cheap and whitewash plentiful ; the cottages look neat and healthful, and the people have that sort of civility that marks the true peasant—all touch their hats or drop curtseys. Though in Monmouthshire, I find Captain Fluellin said right,¹ for divine service is performed alternately in Welsh and English, and the clergyman repeats the text in Welsh to his congregation. It sounds harmonious enough. He has an ungraceful manner and an odd twang in his voice, but an air of sincere piety, an *onction* that forces you to listen with an attention you would not give to a more polished sermon. Every word tells, because it comes from his heart—yet a mere Welsh curate who serves two churches and labours in a little farm. I was glad to hear that Mrs. Sumner (*now at Winchester*), while her husband had the see of Llandaff, sent him a present of fifty pounds. They were very good to the poor. The present bishop, Copleston, is new. The bishops have no residence, they hire what house they can get—all save my friend Watson [1782-1816], who was *liberal*, proposed to equalise the sees, argued against the wealth and power of the Church, and so aimed at its highest preferments himself, and being enraged at not getting it, never dreamed of troubling his head about this poor paltry diocese which he visited for a month once in three or four

¹ *i.e.* that King Henry must be Welsh because he was born in Monmouth.

years. The *illiberal prejudiced* bishops come and reside.

At Ragland church I first saw two graves strewn with flowers, and I observe in most of the churchyards the burial-places of higher people are enclosed with iron rails, and shrubs planted within to shade the graves. It is so here. Mrs. W. lost two or three infant children, and one married daughter died lately. She is at pains to make flowers grow above them ; it suits her originally romantic turn, but I do not wonder she should have indulged that in following what is the custom of the country.

Ragland Castle was too distant for the gig,—we went to it in a post-chaise. I never yet saw so fine a ruin, or one so beautifully clothed with ivy. It must have been a magnificent residence when entire ; the walls are all standing, and they say the Beaufort family might have repaired it so as to be habitable, but as it never has been inhabited since the Parliament forces took and dismantled it, I presume that *might* respects a very distant time. Roger North describes Badminton as their residence in Charles the 2nd's time.

Thursday.—On reflection I am convinced —'s education of M. was wise, and intense application most salutary to her mind, which, like some others I have had the misfortune to know (the subject comes near home), had a singularly imaginative turn in her childhood. She lived in an ideal world, created a society, and was once found crying for the death of a favourite friend that

never existed. Well for her that this was repressed and *ground down* by culture. I can remember something very like it, but I kept it to myself. Had it been discovered and effectually checked as it is in her, I should not have written verses, but been a happier, wiser, better being, escaped worse than follies ; but the blue-stockingsphobia was so prevalent with the males of my house, that I was bid to mind my work, which I detested, and the castle-building went on in secret unchecked. Do not wonder that I shudder at seeing in some folks an evident disposition to *rêverie*. My friend had much intercourse with Willis, and he told her he held it of material importance to struggle with a disposition to reverie. Many people, he said, might have kept themselves out of his hands if they had resolutely done so ; but, alas ! it is the dram-drinking of the mind, and wears and wastes it as ardent spirits undermine the constitution. M. may be less agreeable to me for having through labour sobered herself into the *esprit rangé* we now see her, leaving an interesting conversation to regulate the house or superintend her sister's lessons, but, oh ! the infinite gain to herself ! I fear the wild, untamed genius would be more the " child after my own heart," because my own heart is still childish and foolish, and in spite of bitter experience, bitter remorse for time wasted, duty neglected, for a selfish, useless life, it would more readily cling to its like than to anything far better. Well, good-bye ! I really have so little time to

write as long as the obliging weather keeps fair, that you must not expect such long letters often. I find one has come to my maid and another to me under Sir Wm's frank. I grudge his having such trouble. Adieu.

I am not likely to write to Ly. Gardiner—write yourself, you goose !

LLANOVER, *Monday, 22nd Sept.* [1828].

I thought I should have been at Monmouth by this hour to-day, but Mrs. Scott has put me off till Thursday, therefore I do not set out till Wednesday. I will take the opportunity to return your friend's letter and write you a few lines into the bargain. The weather having continued uninterruptedly fine, here is my week's journal :—

Monday.—Mr. Hall drove his wife and me to Crickhowell in a tandem, but with a postilion on the leading horse, a safe and most swift conveyance. He likes to go like the wind. The whole road beauteous, Crickhowell a neat white town with a ruined castle overtopping it. Here we called on Mr. Payne, a clergyman, who was here last week for a day, a man of letters and an antiquarian, that can tell one the meanings of words, the site of camps, etc. *Tuesday.*—Mrs. Hall, Miss Paytherus, and I went on the canal up towards Pontypool. *Wednesday.*—We carried Miss Paytherus home to Abergavenny Castle, and went to Arcadia, a gentleman's house on the side of the Derry, a subordinate mountain which the Sugar-loaf crowns. Taking

the young ladies of the family for guides, we walked to the top of the said Derry. *Thursday*.—A grand expedition to the iron-works at *Nant-y-glo*, or near them, with Miss Paytherus who had returned, but whom we set down again on our way back. We went a certain distance in a post-chaise; there Mr. Hall met us, and we ascended a wooden cart with low wheels drawn by one horse, made to go on the railroad, and so proceeded six or seven miles up into the mountains—Pyrenean enough, I assure you; at least enough for me, for sometimes in my heart I felt terrified, and in places where we were on the very edge of the precipice, the railroad cut out of solid rock, without a *garde-fou*, I am afraid I was inclined to look away from the beautiful landscape below, rather than to enjoy it. This gave rise to wholesome reflections on the utility of what produces self-control. I knew these young people would have wondered (perhaps laughed) at any outward signs of fear, accordingly I kept my apprehensions to myself, and in so doing mastered them. Real danger there was none, for our good strong cart-horse had not the least mind to run away with us. Only sometimes we met other tram-carts, and had to get out of their way as we best could. Then, to be sure, I rejoiced at the proposal of alighting and going a little way on two legs. The scenery was both wild and lovely—woody glens with torrents roaring through them, and dark hills rising brown above. The only thing I quarrel with is the lack of their proper

native tenants, goats. It seems they are so destructive from their habits of browsing that all farmers set their faces against them. The sheep in these places are as nimble and venturous, but not so picturesque. *Thursday night*.—came a Mrs. Ram and two daughters, Mrs. W.'s [Waddington] sister widow of a relation of Ld. Courtown's. She is in wretched health. *Friday*.—We drove the Misses to Abergavenny and walked a good while on the banks of the Uske. *Saturday*.—Mr. Hall drove them and me a *giro* to see views. *Sunday*.—We had a very pretty walk to church and back, near a mile off. I am in love with the Monmouthshire churches, almost as humble buildings as the Scotch, but not like them, looking like barns, and ugly barns too ; I will try to make out the usual shape [a rough sketch here], very low and nicely white-washed. Ours has a tower steeple, which is very rare. They usually stand at some distance from their village on fine green knolls sloping down to a river or brook, and the churchyard is sure to have (more or fewer) large yew-trees in it. Some of them have not a single gravestone, in others these are numerous, and the places where higher persons have been interred are enclosed with rails and planted with flowering shrubs. At Ragland alone I saw two graves newly strown with fresh flowers ; this I expected to find everywhere, but they tell me it is done only once a year, on Palm Sunday, when the country people each weed the grave of their own relation and scatter flowers over it when

they have finished. Mrs. Hall, who is zealous for the Welsh, though (as her mother reminds her) without a single drop of Welsh blood in her veins, affirms they are in themselves excellent, simple, good people, but that the mail-coaches and canal-boats have corrupted them by bringing strangers. Irish vagabonds, too, arrive, and the forges are usually worked by depraved persons. Still, when I hear her husband (a magistrate) twit her with *two* trials for burglary at the last sessions, I know by comparison how the matter must stand. In other counties one hears of two-and-twenty. He also throws in her teeth a woman hanged for poisoning her husband, to which she answers that an execution was then so rare it caused a general alarm. The truth is, some atrocious crimes, though they speak a more horrible guilt in the individual who commits them, do not denote such a corrupt state of society as some lesser ones. The woman who poisoned her husband probably communicated her design to nobody, persuaded nobody to do the like. The man who robs, forges, or coins, gains as many accomplices as he can, and perhaps trains a dozen boys to help him. Adieu. Write to Danesfield, Great Marlow.

[DANESFIELD ?] [Oct. (?) 1828].

Poor Mrs. W. [Waddington] does not know I ever wrote a verse in my life. I did not betray that propensity among the old ladies with whom she saw me upwards of forty years ago, and afterwards

her marriage fixed her in the country, and her visits to London have been few and far between, so she has known nothing particular of me, only retained the early idea of my being a superior being, because I was the *finest young* lady who visited Mrs. Delany ; or at least that was disposed to take any good-humoured notice of the little niece, for Lord Bath's sisters, who sometimes came with their mother, were the coldest and most repulsive girls in London, thought it all "*a great bore*," and would not have condescended even to say six words to myself, let alone to "*that chit*." I think I need not describe the sort of manners to you. Only observe that such things always were and probably always will be. "Why seems it so particular to thee?" That I liked the old people's conversation you can also conceive to have been very quizzable, but to have made the old people like and cry me up in Miss Port's ears. And she, being a child by herself, had nothing to do but to listen and take her impressions from them. Mrs. Delany had real genius, and was a sort of miracle in her day, having made a proficiency in painting very far beyond anybody flourishing *now*, when it is so much more cultivated and better understood. Sir Joshua Reynolds himself looked up to her, and once could not be convinced that one of her crayon pictures was not done in oil, but by having the glass taken off and examining it closely. *He* was no better versed in the science of drawing and colouring than she. She had excelled equally in music, and in every

sort of beautiful work ; had read a great deal, had lived with wits, poets, statesmen—Dean Swift, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Granville—was visited in Mrs. W.'s memory by Mason, Bishop Hurd, Frederick Montagu, Lord Orford, Mr. Gilpin, etc. ; was the last *real Granville* (Lord Lansdowne's niece). Then the full sunshine of Royal favour shone on her closing days. She lived at Windsor the three last years, visited by the King every day without fail, and of course courted by every one around him. In that sphere grew up Mrs. W. [Waddington], who was hardly seventeen when her aunt died, at nearly eighty-eight. Do you wonder she should retain a hankering after everything elevated in every way—rank, literature, and *les beaux arts* ? The society of Mrs. Locke and Miss Burney gave her a tone of sentimental exaggeration she has never since been able to shake off ; but I must seal and send my letter, or be again too late for the post. The sketch shall be finished another time. Adieu !

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To Sir Walter Scott

GLOUCESTER PLACE, 25th October 1830.

DEAR SIR WALTER,—I have been feasting upon the Demonology and Witchcraft ; yet some stories freshly rung in my ears, and I am sure fully equal to any of those you tell, give me a longing to attack you for civilly supposing the present *enlightened age* rejects the superstitions of our forefathers because they were absurd, though I grant it has dropped

them because they are out of fashion. Vanity and expense in dress were not left off along with hoops and bag-wigs, nor credulity with the belief in hobgoblins. And I own that I think, of the two, it is more rational to ascribe a miracle, a supernatural fact, to the agency of a devil or even a fairy, than to imagine it effected by itself without any agent at all, divine or diabolical. But hear what has happened in 1829-30.

You know, perhaps, that the mania of Animal Magnetism rages anew, and more than ever both in France and Germany. A lady, by name Miss Stevens, went from Cheshire to Paris, I am told, and there was cured last winter by a magnetizing doctor of some inward disease. This is nothing, a straw in the balance : mark the next. The process, performed before a large circle, who carefully noted down what passed, cast her into a deep sleep, a trance, a state of total insensibility, during which she was unconscious of anything she uttered. However, on being properly questioned, she described her complaints most accurately, using the scientific anatomical terms that none but a professional person could understand. I did not hear that she talked Greek, but you will agree that she might as well. This done to everybody's edification, they began to think she might give them information on other points. So an English lady asked her if she could tell where a certain Captain Smith then was, and what he was doing. Now, Miss Stevens, alive and waking, knew nothing of Captain Smith,

not so much as that such a person existed, but Miss Stevens entranced answered readily that he was in Ireland and had lately had a dangerous fall from his horse, which has since been ascertained by exact comparison of dates as a positive truth. And this is credited by people who are enlightened up to the throat, who subscribe to London Universities, frequent Royal Institutions, and who would have the face to laugh at a Cock-lane-ghost ; nay, who, I am afraid, would take a contemptuous tone about things of more importance. For one is often enough reminded of Charles the Second's exclamation : " Odds fish ! This learned doctor believes everything but the Bible." My dear Sir Walter, it is not for you to toad-eat the March of Intellect when it can counter-march in such a manner.

What you say of the disorder that presents apparitions to the eye interests me particularly, for I knew an instance and had an account of it from the person herself, an old Mrs. Middleton, widow of the once great surgeon David Middleton, and the last of the Yorkshire family of Fairfax. She was past fourscore, but in clear possession of a very sound understanding, and, having lived much with medical men, saw the subject in the light they would have done, without alarm or perplexity. She assured me she had no other symptom of delirium at the time, nor did she feel herself ill ; though her servants, frightened at her asking why the garden was full of people, sent in all haste for Dr. Warren (the present one), who made her go to bed, and by

bleeding her sent off the spectres. They, however, haunted her for three days, but were not troublesome or disagreeable ; on the contrary, she said it rather amused her to lie and look at their figures and dresses, 'till one of them came and sate upon her bed. Then, growing displeased, she tried to push it away, and found that her hand went through vacancy. The same thing, she told me, had occurred to her once before, though in a far slighter degree—certainly from none of the causes you assign, for there could not be a more temperate person, nor a better regulated mind.

In the bushel of advertisements tacked to the *Quarterly Review*, I spy two from Cadell that I am very glad to see—*New Tales of a Grandfather* and *Robert of Paris*. By the bye, it has struck me that the review of Southey's *John Bunyan* bears some tokens of coming from that quarter. But Pope said of old, "Every coxcomb knows me by my style"—so I dare not be confident. And now I have told you the two stories your book made me wish you should hear, I will have done. I hope by your visiting Drumlanrig with the Lockharts you were all well. If ever you come again to London and find me living, there is nobody it will give more pleasure to.—Ever affectionately yours,

L. STUART.

No answer required, you know.

To Miss Louisa Clinton

[GLOUCESTER PLACE],
Wednesday [March 1831 (?)].

Observe that I got the frank on *Monday*, so my letter must have credit as a volunteer, notwithstanding my having received yours yesterday. Mrs. Knox was in town yesterday to go to shops, call at her brother's, Lady Stuart's, etc., ending with a dentist's, where her poor little girl had three great teeth drawn. I carried them to these places, and while I was waiting for them at the last, began to think I had got into Newgate among a set of convicts awaiting sentence, there were such pale melancholy faces sitting in expectation of a fearful summons to Mr. Cartwright's presence. Mary was in excellent spirits.

If it were not for the serious vexation it probably caused to you, I could almost laugh at the new bailiff's trooping off the day after he came. But (alas!) the mournful truth is that *good* servants will not offer themselves where they understand there has been a habit of continual change. I once had a footman—we rather—not particularly excellent, but sober, honest, and clean. The lady he had served before told us that he was young when she took him, and on her saying, "Well, then, I shall write for your character," he *made a leg* and replied, "Very well, madam, I'll step down and inquire yours." They are better bred than to tell us this, but we may be sure it is what they all

do ; indeed, they must be wanting in common sense if they did it not. And as I would not take a servant who I found had lived in half a dozen places within the last three years, so they—I need not say the rest. It may not be one's fault, but it is one's grievous misfortune when it happens. I am heartily glad you are coming. I shall call dutifully on the young ladies to-day or to-morrow, and shall have plenty of evenings for you.

Mrs. Lockhart told me that her husband, calling on Lord Sidmouth, heard from him that Lady Sidmouth had lately met at dinner (he did not say where) one Colonel Jones whom you have heard of, who said to her something sneering about Lord Sid.'s conduct towards him, and then declared the only way to do any good in this country would be to *erect a gallows at one end of Regent Street and a guillotine at the other*. With the clearance these could make we might have some chance of going on well, pretty evidently pointing out that the clearance would include Lord Sidmouth in the first place. I pricked up my ears at Lady Sid.'s name, you must know, because I had heard Mrs. Hutchinson talk of her as her intimate acquaintance, and Lady Sheffield had happened to tell me that Lady Charlotte one day met the said *Colonel Jones* at dinner at *Colonel Hutchinson's*!!!! and said he was a vulgar man, but quieter and more moderate than she expected. I was with L^y. Sheffield Sunday evening, and I own I had a malicious pleasure in carrying her my story. She was delighted with it,

and vowed she would roast Lady Charlotte well for Col. Jones's moderation. She knew she had lately met Lady Sidmouth at the H.'s, therefore felt quite sure it must have passed there, but not a word of this bright conversation had Ly. Ch^{tte}. repeated. "And is Col. Jones," said I, "looked upon as fit company for other gentlemen?" "Why, really," answered she, "I should have thought *not*, but Col. Hutchinson, who is something of a radical himself, seems to me to have but few acquaintances, and those very odd people." She and Lady Charlotte were going together to Sh^d. Place to-day for the holidays. When they return the Miss Townshends (Bayning) are to pay her a week's visit in Portland Place. I met Miss Emily the other day. She said Mrs. Weddell was pretty well, and now longing to be in town. Yet come she is not.

To go on with the chapter of Col. Jones. I have learned from Ly. Stuart the truth of the affair between her nephew Cumberland and him. In one of *Radical's* letters to the *Times*, Lady Albinia Cumberland was set down as having a pension for her *former services* to certain of the *Princes*—in *Italics*. Richard Cumberland wrote to Jones, as the known author, to demand a contradiction and apology for this scandalous attack on his mother's character, or else *satisfaction*. Jones refused both. Richard C. posted him as a coward, and then some others of the family taking it up, *Radical* avowed he had been misinformed and was sorry. And what do you think was meant? Why, the old

story (too old for *you* ever to have heard) of the late Duke of Gloucester and Lady *Almeria Carpenter*, who had no more to do with L^y. A. Cumberland than with L^y. L. Clinton, and, like several other people whose pensions *Radical* complains of, has been dead and buried many years. But it is all one to poor L^y. Albinia, whom two-thirds of the kingdom will believe to have been some Prince's mistress in her youth, instead of the careworn wife, widow, and mother we have known her from first to last.

Admiral and Mrs. Scott were in town (at Captain Bowles's) all last week for the drawing-room, and she weathered everything without any headache.

Lady Stuart is greatly better.

Sir W. Scott has been well enough to attend a Reform meeting and make a speech, which Sir R. Peel says is the best the question has yet produced.

A visitor, and the carriage ready too. So good-bye !

[GLOUCESTER PLACE],
Friday evening [Jan. 1832].

I have got yours of yesterday. Your feelings are just what I expected they would be [on Lady Sheffield's death]. . . . This has been such another odious fog as we had on Christmas Day, and I have seen nobody but Dickenson, who told me he had with great difficulty prevailed on your father to stay within doors. If he will but do that, D. thinks his cold of no importance. For me, I am in no way tempted to transgress. Talking increases my

cough, and the fewer people I see the better. I wrote to Miss Berry yesterday, and shall inclose you her answer, the best of which is that poor Ly. Ch^{tte}. [Lindsay] cries freely—all one has for it in such a case. I shall send my maid to-morrow to see her if possible, but as they do not know each other, there may be no free communication.

I take this opportunity of returning you A. K.'s fragments. I do believe it has been of material service. . . . As for A. K.'s French passage, you will be surprised at the impression it makes on my mind—as neither more nor less than *commonplace*. Perhaps she has not, but I have read so many descriptions of concentrated feelings, boiling passion under *un froid extérieur*, dark and gloomy minds, that this strikes me as only what I have seen fifty times before. In short, one is now (in a different sense) like Macbeth, “We have supped full of horrors,” etc. The school of *Sentiment* overwrote itself till it became mawkish and nauseating; and this school is doing the same thing, till dark thoughts and turbulent passions will at last make one cry Fee-fo-fum!

By her further description I should pronounce it *unwholesome* reading. The smallest grain of *amour physique* poisons the whole, renders it literally and positively *beastly*, for it is describing the sensations of a brute animal. And here lies the difference between even *bad* English books and the French ones, which every one reads without blushing. Mrs. Bellamy and Mrs. Baddeley, two women of

the town, whom I remember as actresses, wrote their Memoirs. They painted their first false step either as the effect of seduction, they were victims to the arts employed to ruin them, or else they had been led away by their *affections*; they had conceived a violent passion for such and such a man, whom they took pains to paint as formed to captivate the *heart*. Madame Roland, one of the heroines of the French Revolution, a *virtuous* woman, so far as chastity goes, writes her Memoirs and tells you what were her *sensations towards the other sex in general* (without any particular object) at 14 or 15 years old!!! And young ladies were taught to read and admire this who would not have been allowed to open *Tom Jones*, where Fielding certainly does describe *l'amour physique* between Tom and Molly Seagrim, but I daresay would as soon have given Sophia an inclination to commit murder as hinted that she ever had Madame Roland's *sensations*, or even that Tom had them towards her. *Their* passion he studied to refine and ennoble. The French philosophy labours to brutalise and degrade whatever it handles, rakes into the dirt for vile motives. And even supposing it hits right, I should say, as of my dinner, let me eat in peace, do not force me into the kitchen or the slaughter-house to see the nastiness which you say attends the best cookery. The butter looks fresh and good, do not insist upon telling me that perhaps the dairymaid rolled it with dirty hands.

Oh, I do agree with A. K. the tribe of magazines

etc. etc. etc. are most unwholesome dissipation indeed, and pernicious to young minds, because they think they are gaining knowledge by thus skimming every subject. And I do own I should think Charley better employed in reading the *Arabian Tales* than the *United Service Journal*. He would rise from one not the least unfitted for Coxe's *Life of Marlborough*, which the other will make him confident he knows quite enough of already.

The Montagus call now and then just to look at me; their uncle always better—better, but I suspect no material change. L^y. M. has had a cold. Mrs. Scott has a very bad one, and is nearly confined herself. Anna Maria, having no carriage, can seldom come to me, but seems well and well content.

Like you, I can hardly believe all is at an end in Portland Place. It seems like a dream. But now good-night. I have written enough.

DANESFIELD, *Monday, 16th of Sept'* [1833].

DEAR LOUISA,—I go to town to-morrow for the remainder of the week, and then I hope to follow the Bromleys to Baginton this day se'nnight. They were to cross the water Friday, be in London to-day, and sleep at St. Albans to-night.

If you are in town I shall see you, if not I will certainly call on your sisters. And perhaps Providence may allow us some comfortable time together after my Baginton visit is made, as I presume the

B.'s will go to Cheshire the end of October. But who knows? Good-bye for the present.

I must tell you an admirable *mot* of Talleyrand's told us by Lady Davy. He was asked whether he did not think Lady Fitzroy Somerset very well dressed. "*Mais non—ça commence trop tard, et ça finit trop tôt*"—the best and shortest description of a bare neck and short petticoats I ever heard.

CAPESTHORNE, *Monday, 18th of Nov* 1833.

DEAR LOU,—I have just received your note of the 15th, sent over by Mrs. [Edward] Stanley: she brought me your former one on Wednesday, and I grant I ought to be ashamed of not having yet written to you, but I grow slow and indolent, and besides, on arriving here Tuesday evening I found what I thought an unpleasant account of Mrs. Scott [of Danesfield], which kept me in hot water all the week. Yesterday I had a letter from her that partly relieved me, especially as it was written with characteristic eagerness about *Trevelyan*—though yet she seems to *forget* what I told her not long ago of my own intended motions, and that is not comfortable. However, sufficient to the day, etc.; we must leave the future to the will of Heaven.

*Trevelyan*¹ is as much *blown*, I am afraid, as if the name were affixed to it. I say "I am afraid," for I will own to your private ear that I cannot get

¹ By Jane, afterwards Lady Montagu, the step-daughter of Lady Frances Scott.

over my old—perhaps *aristocratic*—prejudices, which make it a loss of caste. In 1815, when Mrs. S. M. (Stewart Mackenzie), then Lady Hood, returned from India, a great many of the Edinburgh people pressed her to publish her journal, which was extremely entertaining, much more so than your Capt. Mundy's, etc. She was staggered and asked my advice. She saw I was against it, and said, "Now speak honestly, do you think it losing caste?" "Why—why—yes." Afterwards Dr. Gregory (the most sensible and shrewd of men), chancing to call on her, began in his droll way, "Oh, ho! So I hear you are going to turn authoress. Well! we plebeians can have no objection to your putting yourself on a level, becoming one of us—but no more salaams to the Begum." She wisely took the hint; and I must add that she has told me since, she once said to her present husband, "Do you know I was on the very point of publishing a book." "I am sure," answered he, "I would never have married you if you had." To my mind the frequency of the thing since that time increases the objection instead of removing it. I cannot bear *her* making one in the *crew* of lords and ladies who swarm in modern days. And Bentley's puffs in the newspaper quite sicken me, all admirable and charming alike, written by his *literary adviser*, you may be sure, just in the same spirit as the puffs of Warren's blacking and Rowland's kalydor. Oh, dear! it is a degradation I cannot bear. However, keep these

reflections sacredly to yourself, and even *burn this part of my letter*, for she does not feel for herself what I do for her ; it is not, as you might suppose, that vanity conquers pride, for she has as little of the one as the other, but Miss B. [Berry], Miss B. the prime mover in everything, has always led her to think any regard to one's rank or class an illiberal prejudice, indeed a wrong feeling. Miss B., who is of *no* family and has made her way in the world by her wits, would *rise* in it by bringing forth an admired work ; she has tried, though with no great success, and what Dr. Gregory expressed in joke she feels in earnest, glad if she could get us all to print and publish, and be on a level with the authoresses whom perhaps we should not equal. In short, it is a little like ladies who have made a *faux pas*, and are delighted to draw another woman (especially if hitherto respectable) into the same scrape. . . . As for secrecy, to my surprise A. K. the first day she came said aloud, " Well ! I think nobody will ever visit Lady S. again from London." Mrs. Williams did not seem to understand her, but afterwards I found was the person who had told her, and who should tell *her*, but Eber's little shopboy in London ! So among them Louisa soon caught it, and presently, on our going to see Mrs. Stanley, in came the Rector, with " I have been at the Hall, L^y. Maria has just got the *Court Journal*, which says *Trevelyan* is written by L^y. S. of Petersham," so there is an end, you see, and I cannot help feeling hurt. *One who was lately*

snatched from us [Lady Lothian] quite agreed with me on this head, and said, as I did "write and delight *us* with it, but do not publish any more, do not be known as a declared novel writer." She knows my opinion so well that I find she even wrote to Mrs. W. not to talk of it before me. Well ! there is no help for it now, so I thought it needless, indeed foolish, to bid L. keep a secret that everybody knew. . . . A. K. will tell you that she dined here, called to visit me in due form another day ; this week she expects somebody, I forget whom, and the early part of the next goes to Knowsley.

To return to *Trevelyan*. I long to know what you will hear of it from Mary. I think Lady Augusta admirably drawn, her letters are real life, and what a striking little trait her being less fond of St. Ives than of the other boy because he had seen Theresa. But *entre nous*, sacredly, I do think she has too much excuse for standing out about the latter, and A. K. made the observation too. Theresa's dress, looks, and manners on returning from abroad would have scared a much more indulgent and liberal person ; nor am I sure that Trevelyan had a fair right to ask his wife to countenance her when she had declined going, as he advised his sister, during Lord Herbert's absence, and talked of *engagements* which could only be to Lascelles. But interest, interest, interest, as Mrs. Williams says, is the first, second, and third perfection in a novel, and that never fails or slackens, nor does one hardly know such a hero as Trevelyan.

Mrs. Williams will have it that Theresa is not worthy of him, nor likely to have attracted such a man, and caused such a lasting passion; she is not intellectual enough; a mere boarding-school-girl un-informed, etc. etc. Pshoh! I am not over sure that such men like much *mind* in a woman. I am very sure that they can do without it—and at any rate Theresa has capabilities, is what a superior man might train and make something of. However, there is but one voice as (to) thinking it a most interesting book—what nobody can lay down.

I have got through this with many interruptions. It seems to me that luncheon so soon follows breakfast, and going out, luncheon, and dinner, going out, that morning one has none, and evening, of course, you know is out of the question for writing. And so here is dressing time, and finish I must. Pray send me a letter to myself and don't mind postage. I am glad Henry is gone abroad—poor Cath. Fan.! [Fanshawe]. Oh, the bell.—Adieu.

CAPESTHORNE, *Thursday, 28th of November* [1833].

I begin to-day and shall take the unfinished letter with me to the Rectory to-morrow; when it will go depends upon A. K.'s convenience. I had a letter from L^y. — on Tuesday that gave me great content, for I, like you, felt a little afraid that the Lady Augusta might give offence. However, her withers are altogether unwrung, and she speaks of *Trevelyan* just as I could wish, enumerating all

her bothers and businesses, but saying she cannot resist taking it up at odd times, "it is so very, very interesting!!" She has not yet come to the end; however, this has quite dispelled my fears. For that matter, when we all read *Emma* together at poor Bothwell—the duchess one—we could not help laughing a little the more at the devotion of father and daughter to their respective apothecaries, and all the coddling that ensued from it, but we did not find that it struck the devotees in existence. People are so used to themselves! One of Foote's most comical farces represented to the life a certain Mr. Ap. Rees, whom, as old people told me, it did not in the least exaggerate. They swore to having heard him utter the very things the farce put in his mouth. But he himself never found it out. He was intimate with Foote, read the play, told him it was d—— stupid and would not succeed, wondered it did, yet went to it and laughed for company, till some good-natured friend informed him he was the person ridiculed; then he went in a rage to the Lord Chamberlain and desired it might be suppressed. But it is more wonderful still that people can hear and repeat so differently. J——s [James Douglas] and Mina, of whom you have heard, are both very literal persons, who never talk at random or magnify. Now I daresay you have been told as I have—with great exultation too—that an invalid played at backgammon with the former and beat him, though a first-rate player. I began to exult too, because *any* game (except

perhaps pure hazard, or heads and tails) requires some exercise of the mind, consideration, computation, thought in short. But what think you was J.'s *own* account? "Perhaps for a throw or two the other chanced to play the moves according to the throw, but oftener wrong; as for playing the *game*, not at all"!!! This, I own, takes away my confidence in what I am now assured is said by Dr. H. [Hume] "that nobody ever got so much better without getting better still (*i.e.* recovering) unless in case of a relapse." I wish I could be sure this was not *heard double*. However, it is a blessed faculty that enables people to see and hear what gives them pleasure, and I am sure one has often occasion to wish it possessed by those who have the contrary gift of seeing and hearing everything disagreeable. . . . Now it is time to tell you my plans for the future. I have given up all thoughts of Yorkshire [Lord Wharnccliffe's] and made my excuse. I go, as I said above, to the Rectory (Mr. Edward Stanley's) to-morrow by dinner time and stay till Monday morning, then to the great house [Alderley], and stay over Tuesday night, which I think very handsome. Then Louisa claims repayment of those five days, so I settled to stay ten longer and not set out southward till Monday the sixteenth. It may be the Saturday following before I reach home, because I shall stop a couple of days on the road at William's [Stuart's, Aldenham], and in dark winter so near the shortest day one must not hope to travel fast. All this, you

see, will bring it to the New Year before I go to Ditton, but I hope you will meet me in London ready primed, and prepared for our holidays there—which I daresay Lady Louisa agrees with me that nothing ought to prevent, nor will I hear of any objection, let brick and mortar fudge as they may. It must be, so make up your mind and arrange accordingly. I find L^d. and L^y. M. are going to Beaulieu for a week next Monday.

The newspapers having transferred their puffs from *Trevelyan* to something more recent I am tranquillized again, and almost regret my sincerity in taking notice of them to *her* lest she should be hurt; for I cannot help saying what I think just *as* I think it. I have not yet heard from her; indeed, as she was to stay only two days at Hirsell (Lord Home's), and would find the Kerrs there (besides Lisette), she could not have time to write, nor will she immediately after she comes to Ardoch (Major Moray Stirling's), as the meeting with Mary [Douglas, her sister, whose son had died lately] will naturally engross her whole attention for a good while. As I have got thus far in my letter, I begin to think I may as well send it to-day *via* Mr. Byham as keep it for an uncertain chance. Mr. (Sir John's son) and Mrs. Stanley *par excellence* dine here to-day, but as I never yet saw him, I cannot well ask him for a frank on mine own bottom. I wish you would like my poor friend Miss Knight's *Guy de Lusignan* a little better: the

style is very good, the descriptions very exact, the history very correct ; but, alas ! it is not *Trevelyan*. —Adieu.

To Lady Montagu

VERSAILLES, Oct. 1834.

“ . . . Last night I yielded to importunity, and was persuaded by Mrs. Damer to go to the play, which I long refused, knowing I should not hear one word, or rather understand, for the sound itself is loud enough. It was a new piece of Mons^r. Chateaubriand's, which he would not venture on the Paris stage, because his pious sentiments would be sure to displease there. As I expected, I could not make out what they were saying, but seeing them in turbans, I perceived the personages must be Oriental. What was my astonishment to find that this pious work of this pious man brought on the stage MOSES—*Moses* coming down from Mount Sinai with the two tables!!! We had the Ark and the Tabernacle carried in procession, etc. etc. etc., a love story not wanting, however, for the son of Aaron is seduced to idolatry by an Amalekite princess. “*Dieu y entre-t-il?*” asked an old French friend of mine, Mad^e. de Canillac, who lives here, and who, though not *dévôte*, agrees with me in thinking the exhibition grossly profane, “*aussi bien que fort ridicule.*” I always thought Chateaubriand had a great deal of the mountebank in him. I bought the play, so you will see it. In his preface he talks of Racine's sacred dramas, but,

after all, the histories of Esther and Athalie, though in the Bible, are *mere history*. The finger of God is not concerned in them, nor is Joad a more sacred person than Fénelon or Cranmer—but Moses! Moses! The delivery of the law in thunder and lightning! Moses with the glory on his head! looking very like a pair of horns!! It really is very characteristic of the times and the country. When I got the book I could scarcely follow the actors, who ate half their words and bellowed the other half. I believe they were very indifferent. The theatre is very pretty, and just of an agreeable, comfortable size. I did not stay till the end, but hear the *sifflets* prevailed—not for the reasons, which, *I hope*, would have produced hissing in England, since both sides consider it very religious—otherwise Moses would have been packed off on his first entrance.”

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MRS. MONTAGU

From a Manuscript Book

THE only blue-stocking meetings which I myself ever attended were those at Mrs. Walsingham's and Mrs. Montagu's. To frequent the latter, however, was to drink at the fountain-head ; for although Miss Monckton (now old Lady Corke), Mrs. Thrale, Lady Herries, etc., gave similar parties, Mrs. Montagu eclipsed them all. Nor was she a common character. Together with a superabundance of vanity—vanity of that happy, contented, comfortable kind which, being disturbed by no uneasy doubts or misgivings, keeps us in constant good-humour with ourselves, consequently with everything else—she had quick parts, great vivacity, no small share of wit, a competent portion of learning, considerable fame as a writer, a large fortune, a fine house, and an excellent cook. Observe the climax, for it is not unintentional, the cook may perhaps be the only one of the powers I have enumerated who could carry on the war single-handed. Thus endowed, Mrs. Montagu was acquainted with almost all persons of note or distinction. She paid successful court to all authors, critics, artists, orators, lawyers, and clergy of high

reputation ; she graciously received and protected all their minor brethren, who paid court to her ; she attracted all tourists and travellers ; she made entertainment for all ambassadors, sought out all remarkable foreigners, especially if men of letters ; nay, she occasionally exhibited a few of the very fine exclusive set themselves, at whom her less worldly visitants, country or college geniuses, with nothing but a book in their pockets, were glad to have an opportunity of gazing. But there was a deplorable lack of one requisite—of that art of kneading the mass well together, which I have known possessed by women far her inferiors. As her company came in, a heterogeneous medley, so they went out, each individual feeling himself single, isolated, and (to borrow a French phrase) embarrassed with his own person ; which might be partly owing to the awkward position of the furniture, the mal-arrangement of tables and chairs. Everything in that house, as if under a spell, was sure to form itself into a circle or semicircle. I once saw this produce a ludicrous scene. Mrs. Montagu having invited us to a very early party, we went at the hour appointed and took our stations in a vast half-moon, consisting of about twenty or twenty-five women, where, placed between two grave faces unknown to me, I sate, hiding yawns with my fan and wondering at the unwonted seclusion of the superior sex. At length a door opened behind us, and a body of eminent personages—the chancellor, I think, and a bishop or two

among them—filed in from the dining-room. They looked wistfully over our shoulders at a good fire, which the barrier we presented left them no means of approaching ; then drawing chairs from the wall, seated themselves around us in an outer crescent, silent and solemn as our own. Nobody could be more displeased at this than the mistress of the house, who wanted to confer with them face to face, and not in whispers. But there was no remedy ; we must all have died at our posts, if one lady had not luckily been called away, whose exit made a gap for the wise men to enter and take possession of the fireplace.

A circle such as here described, though the worst shape imaginable for easy familiar conversation, may be the best for a brilliant interchange of—I had nearly said snip-snap—of pointed sentences and happy repartees. Every flash being visible, every joke distinctly heard from one end to the other, the consequent applause may act like a dram upon bodily combatants, invigorating wit and provoking fresh sallies. As fitted for actors and an audience, it may likewise suit whoever has interesting anecdotes to tell and the talent of telling them well ; or whoever can clearly and pleasantly explain something that the surrounding hearers wish to understand. If you had good luck, therefore, you might not only be greatly amused at Mrs. Montagu's, but carry away much that was well worth being remembered. But then, alas ! the circular form is not less convenient to prosers

and people who love to hear themselves talk ; so you might, on the contrary, come in for the most tiresome dissertations, the dullest long stories, the flattest jokes anywhere to be found, all of which, by a sort of courtesy or policy that seemed conventional, were listened to with a complacent show of edification, no one venturing to betray inattention or fidget in his chair, or recollect having heard the same thing (perhaps fifty times) before, or put in a claim to it on behalf of " Joe Miller."

Another entertainment you were pretty sure to meet with, unless the presence of some such wicked spirit as Horace Walpole or " Soame Jenyns " excited apprehensions of ridicule. When matters took their usual course, high-flown compliments were fired off on your right hand and returned with interest on your left, all the louder if no particular goodwill subsisted between the complimentary parties. A *bureau d'esprit* never yet was the temple of sincerity.

And in this scene, amongst these people solely occupied with themselves, did I form a lasting friendship with the late Mrs. Alison, then Miss Gregory, whom Mrs. Montagu had almost adopted as a daughter—the perfection of strict truth, blunt honesty, and clear understanding. She verified the old Scotch proverb, " An ounce of mother's wit is worth a pound of clergy." " That is a Natural," said Mr. Walpole, and the expression exactly suited her. Gifted with a great deal of humour, she enjoyed like a comedy much that passed before her

eyes, yet would never permit a word to be said derogatory to Mrs. Montagu, at whom, I confess, I had sometimes a mind to laugh, but I never durst let Miss Gregory perceive it, although we were girls at the time, and soon treated each other with the freedom and familiarity usual at our age. Thus, though it cannot be denied that constant pretensions of some sort gave a tinge of pedantry and affectation to the blue-stocking set, taken collectively, yet there were individuals, classed among them in common speech, wholly untainted with either. If Miss Gregory, as a young lady, had not sufficient importance to serve as an instance, we may name Mrs. Carter, upon whom the sound scholarship of a learned man sate, as it does upon a man, easily and quietly, and who was no more vain of understanding Greek than an ordinary woman of knowing how to spell. But the very humility and plainness of her character made it avail nothing towards simplifying the general tone of her society, for she loved listening far better than talking; and as she had no quick perception of other people's feelings and absurdities, much less any disposition to expose them, she sate still, honestly admiring what a livelier (though perhaps a shallower) person would have criticized or ridiculed.

The name of "Carter" alone will prove that Mrs. Montagu was not without sincere and valuable friends. And even among the men who diverted themselves most with her foibles were

some who, when serious, would avow a high opinion of her abilities. Of this number was my brother-in-law, Lord Macartney, who piqued himself upon carrying compliments beyond the moon, and maintained that they were always acceptable to every woman without exception, although he paid them in a manner so glaringly ironical, took so little pains to look decently grave, that one wondered how the bait could possibly be swallowed by anybody who had the use of a pair of eyes. I have heard him laugh peal upon peal as he repeated behind Mrs. Montagu's back the fine speeches he had made, or intended to make, bringing in (would you believe it) Venus as well as Minerva, extolling the personal charms of a woman old enough to be his mother, and one who, to do her justice, was quite free from the weakness of wishing to disguise her age. "Oh, never mind" (said he), "you all like to hear of your beauty to the very last." Yet when the laugh was over he would conclude with, "After all, though, she is the cleverest woman I know; meet her where you will, she says the best thing in the company." From all I have said you will infer that she was not unlikely to attract many of those flatterers by trade, vulgarly termed toad-eaters, who are apt to abound wherever the possessors of power or wealth, or even the mere givers of good dinners, betray any relish for the commodity they deal in.

But beside the more common sort, there crept around her a species just one step above them—dabblers in literature, literary coxcombs, male and

female, who, though not absolutely rejecting with scorn the beef and pudding, chiefly coveted her recommendation—the reflected lustre of her celebrity, and a repayment of praise proportioned in quantity and quality to the loads of it which they came to lay down. In a word, she had toad-eaters from interest, and toad-eaters from vanity—poor paltry insects both, and both often furnished with a concealed sting.

But neither flattered her so inordinately as a very different race of beings—good, worthy, honest people, who said nothing which they did not think, and would not have sworn to upon the parish bible ; gentry, in whose skulls the phrenologist (granting his science authentic) would infallibly have found the organ of admiration extraordinarily prominent, and that of discrimination almost imperceptible. Downright sycophants, whose encomiums the vainest of us, in spite of self-love, must now and then secretly mistrust, are perhaps companions less dangerous for persons eminently gifted than such excellent mortals as these. Their truth and integrity being unquestionable, they lavish superlative universal applause, which they pour forth from their hearts—at first possibly declined, put by with a compassionate smile, may in time grow so agreeable to the habituated ear as to make just approbation and distinguishing praise grate upon it like censure. At Mrs. Montagu's these kind souls used to take us young people under their especial charge, acting as flappers, for fear we should

lose opportunities of improvement by our want of attention to what was passing. We were pulled by the sleeve—"My dear, did you listen?" "Did you mind?" "Mrs. Montagu said," "Miss Hannah More observed," "Mr. Harris replied." And it was well that none of us ever cried "What then?" For as the most superior men and women must often discuss ordinary topics in ordinary language, it would sometimes happen that even Mrs. Montagu and Mr. Harris were only debating whether the clouds at sunset had threatened rain or promised fair weather.

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